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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION IN LAKEHEAD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

by

CAROL-LYNNE OLDALE ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled PRINCIPAL PREPARATION IN LAKEHEAD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS submitted by CAROL-LYNNE OLDALE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

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Date: Oct. 3 1991

ABSTRACT

Persons seeking a principalship in Ontario are certified by the Ontario Ministry of Education following the acceptance into and the completion of two courses in addition to a Bachelor of Education. A gap exists between the formal academic preparation and the actual readiness for the position of principal. The purpose of this study was to propose relevant topics and appropriate delivery methods for a principal preparation program offered by a specific school district. The recommended preparation activities were intended to augment the Ministry of Education courses and address areas perceived as necessary by participants from the particular school district.

The conceptual framework examined the role of a principal including the critical task areas, skills, knowledge and personal characteristics considered significant to a principalship. Desirable characteristics, related leadership experience and personal preparation by prospective principals considered pertinent to the position of principal were also identified. Through an examination of the role of a principal and the perceived needs of those aspiring to a principalship, suggestions for preparing principals by a specific school district were proposed as training strategies.

A sample of fifteen people were purposively selected to participate in the study and included senior administrators, practicing principals and persons aspiring to a principalship. Participation involved semi-structured interviews which examined the skills, tasks and personal qualities associated with the role of a principal; forms of experience and pre-service preparation

considered relevant for aspiring principals; and the main components and delivery modes of a preparation program for principals.

The sources of data included transcripts of tape-recorded interviews and observational notes made during and following the interviews. Journal entries by the researcher captured personal reflections and reactions to the data collection process. Each set of transcripts was initially analyzed separately following the questions of the interview guides. Broad categories were subdivided into more specific headings and similarities in the data were compared to identify commonalities.

The nature of a principalship was described in terms of major functions of the principal and the personal qualities and skills related to the performance of the tasks. Of particular significance was the Catholic educational leadership role of a principal in the specific school district. Preparation for a principalship included relevant leadership experiences and significant content topics and delivery methods pertinent to a pre-service training program.

Proposals for training prospective principals addressed specific functions inherent in the role of a principal, Catholic leadership expectations, legislation impacting on a principal and personal preparation for principals. Suggestions related to delivering a pre-service training program for principals focussed on participatory instructional methods and practical field experiences.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

In the near future a considerable number of school principals and supervisory officers in Canada will retire. Leithwood and Avery (1986) reported that thirty-five percent of principals in Ontario, and thirty percent in Alberta, will be eligible to retire within ten years. These conclusions were supported by Fullan, Park and Williams (1987) who reported similar findings in a study of supervisory officers in Ontario. School boards will find themselves faced with a lack of adequately prepared personnel to replace retiring school administrators unless proactive strategies are adopted and implemented. As indicated by Leithwood, Stanley, and Montgomery (1983), the training of school principals looms as a prominent issue for the 1990's. The challenge to individual school boards will be to facilitate principal pre-service preparation to meet local needs. The focus of the study which is the subject of this report was the the preparation of candidates for a career leading to a principalship in an Ontario separate school district.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop recommendations for a pre-service preparation program offered at the school district level which would contribute to the acquisition of the diversity of knowledge and skills that candidates for a principalship should possess. Specifically, the study focussed on the preparation needs of principals in the Lakehead Catholic School Board, as identified by fifteen participants including senior administrators, practicing principals and aspiring principals employed by the designated school system.

The research questions which defined the direction of the study were as follows:

1. What tasks and functions are associated with the role of principal in Lakehead Catholic schools?
2. What personal qualities and skills are considered to be important in performing the role of principal?
3. What forms of experience and pre-service preparation would assist aspiring principals to prepare for the role?
4. What should be the main components and modes of delivery of a preparation program for principals offered by the Lakehead Catholic School Board?

In addition to interview data a review of relevant literature assisted in answering the research questions.

Background to the Study

Candidates for a principalship in Ontario are required to become certificated by the Ministry of Education prior to being eligible for applying for principal or vice-principal positions. Permanent certificates are granted following the successful completion of two courses, offered by several Ontario universities as well as the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The two courses consist of "Program Development and Implementation" and "Program Supervision and Assessment." Course content focusses on the areas of curriculum development and implementation, goal structuring, decision-making, use of leadership skills, relevant legislation, organizational and administrative structures, formative and summative evaluation of teachers, and program assessment and supervision.

The requirements for admission to the principals' courses have changed since their inception. Current applicants for these courses must hold an acceptable university degree; have five years of successful teaching experience; and be qualified to teach in three divisions, including the intermediate division. In addition to these requirements, a variety of conditions are also applied to applicants which include one of,

(i) a Specialist qualification (three methodology courses beyond an undergraduate degree in a specific area of concentration such as French as a Second Language, Primary Education, or Special Education), and

  (a) successful completion of one-half the number of courses required to qualify for a Master's Degree in education, or

  (b) an additional Specialist qualification,

(ii) a Master's degree or a Doctorate in education,

(iii) completion of post-graduate courses equivalent to a Master's Degree in education, or

(iv) certification in a fourth teaching division plus an additional five years of teaching experience (Ministry of Education, 1989).

For persons who received principal qualifications prior to 1989, fewer academic requirements may have applied, resulting in certificated candidates with a diversity of formal university training, not necessarily in the field of educational administration.

The role of the principal has continued to evolve and has become more complex over the last few years. In reviewing the training and certification of Ontario educational leaders, Thomas (1982) referred to the complexity of the leadership role as well as to the increased demands placed on school administrators. The complexity and demands of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders were also recognized by Leithwood and Avery (1986). Another factor which has an impact on the training of school leaders is the image of an effective school principal. Leithwood, Stanley and Montgomery (1983) contended that this image provides ideals and premises from which detailed objectives for pre-service preparation programs can be derived.

Conceptual Framework

The research questions are reflected in the conceptual framework which served to guide the development of the study. The conceptual framework is diagrammed in Figure 1.

The difference between the defined role of a principal and the reality in terms of the personal preparation of those aspiring to a principal's position defines a gap in which some training is needed. By examining the training needs in relation to administrative preparation, a pre-service program for prospective principals in the Lakehead Catholic School Board can be structured.

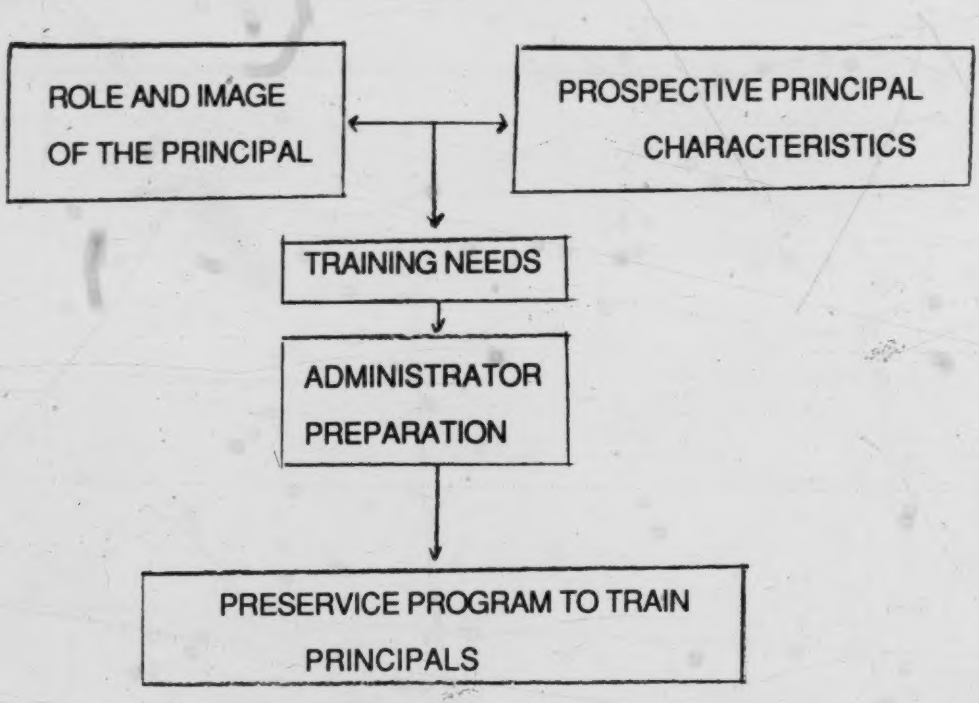
ROLE AND IMAGE OF THE PRINCIPAL
PROSPECTIVE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS
TRAINING NEEDS
ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION
PRESERVICE PROGRAM TO TRAIN PRINCIPALS

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The role of the principal is described as a combination of critical task areas, skills, knowledge and personal characteristics. Persons aspiring to the principalship possess relevant characteristics, related leadership experience and personal preparation for the position of principal. The difference between the described role of a principal and the characteristics and experience of prospective principals indicates training needs to be addressed. Preparation strategies for administrators are recommended to the Lakehead Catholic School Board to plan appropriate activities for aspiring principals.

Significance of the Problem

The study was considered to be significant because of impending retirements and the increasing complexity of the role of the principal. Within five to ten years, several of the twenty-three principals in the Lakehead Catholic School Board will be eligible to retire, giving practical significance to the study. Other school districts facing similar situations regarding the retirement of principals may find the study relevant to their particular situation. The adoption of proactive strategies for training principals could result in school districts having in place the necessary personnel to replace those who retire.

Assumptions

A major assumption underlying this study was that in addition to basic certification, principalship candidates have needs that should be met prior to assuming the position of principal and that training program proposals could be developed to meet these needs. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that some of the identified characteristics of an effective principal were learnable. It was also assumed that research would provide preparation strategies and concepts which could be used as a basis for recommending components of an effective training program for principals.

Delimitations and Limitations

The study was delimited to one school system, and the interviews were delimited to a specific point in time. The proposals for a training program were intended to serve the needs of the Lakehead Catholic School Board.

A limitation of the study is that the restriction to one particular school system for data collection renders generalizability problematic. The reliance on information from specific persons limited the knowledge base to the particular experiences of the selected participants.

Definition of Terms

The following terms require clear definition to ensure consistency in usage throughout the study:

Aspiring Principals. These are teachers qualified through the successful completion of required Ministry of Education courses and seeking appointments to the position of principal.

Pre-service Preparation. This is recognized as all activities prior to an appointment to a principalship including basic certification.

Teacher Designate. A staff member delegated to be responsible in the school in the principal's absence is known as the teacher designate.

Tasks. Specific duties and jobs which the principal performs are described as tasks.

Functions. These are broader areas of responsibility which principals fulfill and include specific tasks.

Qualities. General behaviours and traits possessed by principals are known as qualities.

Skills. Abilities which are more precise in nature are interpreted as skills.

Overview of the Thesis

This chapter has described the context and purpose of the study as well as several aspects of the research approach. In Chapter Two, an understanding of the nature of a principalship and the nature of the Catholic school are explored. Chapter Three details the methodology of the study, describing the data collection and analysis procedures. The data pertaining to nature of the principalship and desirable qualities and skills for an effective principal are presented in Chapter Four. Data related to relevant leadership experiences and to the content and delivery modes perceived significant to a pre-service program for principals are reported in Chapter Five. Proposals for training principals in the Lakehead Catholic School Board are recommended in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven the study is summarized; conclusions of the study and implications for practice and research are also presented.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of current literature confirms the complex and demanding nature of the principalship. Insights into the position may be derived from formal definitions in government and school district legislative documents, images from various sources in the literature, dilemmas faced in balancing the roles of instructional and managerial leader, and the qualities and skills considered critical to carrying out the tasks of a principal. The distinct nature of the Catholic school and its mission holds implications for principals of Catholic schools and is relevant to the design of a preparation program.

Nature of the Principalship

Numerous writers have characterized the role of the principal as complex, ambiguous and demanding. The multifaced nature of the principalship is described by various authors. Although the literature confirms the importance of the principal in the effectiveness of the school, there is little agreement on what specific roles the principal should perform. More difficult to determine are the skills and qualities considered essential to performing the duties of a school principal.

Formal Definitions of the Role

Specific definitions of the role, duties and functions of a principal can be derived from legislative authorities such as theprovincial government and school boards. Since this study concerns an Ontario school district, the legislative authorities from the province of Ontario and the Lakehead District Catholic School Board are of particular relevance. An examination of the policies of the Alberta Department of Education offer some comparable definitions of the responsibilities of the principal.

The Alberta School Act (1988) defines nine specific duties which principals are obligated to perform. Two of the areas of responsibility are concerned with the administrative functions of the school principal: directing the management of the school and maintaining order and discipline. Five duties in the School Act focus on instructional aspects of the school operation: providing instructional leadership; ensuring instruction is consistent with Department of Education courses and programs; evaluating school programs; evaluating teachers; supervising the evaluation of students. The remaining clauses in the School Act describe duties in public relations and present local school boards with the opportunity to specify additional duties for principals.

While the Alberta School Act has prescribed duties for principals only since 1988 (Wilson & Rigby, 1989), the Ontario Ministry of Education has specified the duties of the principal both in the Education Act (1990) and in an additional regulation, Regulation 262, Operation of Schools (1988) for some time.

Section 236 of the Act defines the principal as "a teacher appointed by a board to perform in respect of a school the duties of a principal" (c. 129, s. 1 (1), 39) and specifies that the duties of a principal are in addition to those of a teacher. Both an instructional and administrative role are outlined in the duties defined by the Education Act and Regulation 262. Fourteen clauses describe mainly managerial duties of principals in the areas of discipline, pupil attendance, pupil records, timetabling and schedules, examinations for pupils, pupil promotion, textbook usage, care of pupils and property, reports to the Ministry of Health, access to the school, and co-ordination and co-operation of staff members. The reference to the principal as a teacher adds support to one premise of the literature which identifies the instructional role of the principal as an essential contributing factor in the effectiveness of the school.

Regulation 262 (1988) designates responsibilities of the principal with respect to specific school tasks. The duties included in this legislation focus on the instruction and discipline of pupils; the organization and management of the school; and the supervision of programs, pupils, school activities and staff.

The Policy Manual of the Lakehead District Catholic School Board (1982) explicitly describes the responsibilities of principals in the terms of reference section and implicitly in the principal evaluation policy. Instructional and managerial functions of the principal are expanded into specific responsibilities related to Catholic leadership, supervision of instruction, curriculum development, evaluation of the whole school program, public relations, staff growth and development, and administrative tasks.

The evaluation policy for principals (Policy 812) outlines the criteria by which the effectiveness of the principal in carrying out responsibilities is appraised. Included are:

1. an identification of school conditions based on the physical building, the staff and the students;

2. an evaluation of the progress by the principal on stated school goals;

3. an assessment of administrative and organizational tasks such as policy implementation and student placement;

4. an awareness of curriculum development including knowledge, implementation and development of curriculum;

5. the ability to communicate effectively and to promote public relations;

6. evidence of leadership in Catholic education in the form of a Catholic philosophy, appropriate attitudes, a spirit of community, and liturgical activities;

7. supervision of staff and programs aimed at improvement of instruction;

8. staff development through professional activity programs, classroom observations and faculty meetings.

Based on these evaluation criteria, a managerial and instructional emphasis in the role of principals as well as leadership in Catholic education describe the functions of the principal for the Lakehead Catholic School Board. Other sources in the literature describe the principal in terms of images rather than by specifying distinct tasks.

Images of the Principal

The description of the principal is varied in much of the literature. The leadership and authority of the principal has been examined and many models and concepts have been derived. Various levels of leadership have focussed on the increasing effectiveness of the persons assuming the role of a principal.

In a study of eight principals, Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) found that principals accomplished a variety of tasks and functioned in many modes. They portrayed the eight principals as administrators; organizers and problem solvers; jugglers using values as a basis for decisions; helpers; brokers who confronted people and problems; humanists with interests focussed on people; catalysts creating changes; rationalists; and politicians. Although not all principals in the study exhibited the same behaviours, the different roles assumed by principals in various situations assisted in effective leadership in the school.

In a monograph prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Weldy (1979) described principals as persons who have authority and who are advocates for students, instructional leaders, decision makers, problem solvers, disciplinarians and organizers.

Sergiovanni (1987) developed a model which proposed five leadership forces for describing the principal in increasing degrees of excellence. The technical leadership force describes the lowest form of leadership and is concerned with planning and coordinating activities. The human leadership force is the second level at which the principal possesses high interpersonal skills that enable staff motivation, support and growth. The third level, the educational leadership force, embodies the qualities of an instructional leader with emphasis on school program, achievement and supervision. Symbolic leadership is the fourth level of leadership. Here the principal is viewed as the chief and utilizes selective attention and modelling to demonstrate to others in the organization what is important and valued. The highest level of leadership is classified as cultural at which the leader assumes the role of "high priest" to define, articulate and strengthen values, beliefs and culture to identify the uniqueness of the school. For Sergiovanni, the presence of the first three levels of leadership are essential to competent leaders, but the fourth and fifth levels of leadership are components of excellent leaders.

Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) identified four profiles or types of principal leadership, from the least to the most effective. At the bottom level is the Administrator who is concerned mainly with rules and regulations. The Humanitarian, who is at the second level of effectiveness, focusses on interpersonal skills. At the third level is the Program Manager who centers on instructional programs and corresponds to the general concept of an instructional leader as presented in the literature. The most highly effective profile is the System Problem Solver who moves beyond programs to student growth as the guiding principle.

In a study focussing on the disciplinary function of the principal, Montgomerie, McIntosh and Mattson (1988) adapted the five leadership forces outlined by Sergiovanni to categorize principals as (a) symbolic, (b) instructional, (c) humanistic, (d) technical and (e) disciplinary. This study identified perceptions by various stakeholders in the educational organization about the important roles of principals. The results of the study confirmed that principals are expected to portray a broad number of roles and led the researchers to describe the principal as a "superhero."

The broad scope and diversity of the position of principal is evident in the many images that have been proposed. The two major areas of responsibility relate to administrative and instructional issues. Various sources in the literature identify the difficulties that principals encounter when attempting to focus on these functions.

Dilemma: Manager Versus Instructional Leader

The multifaced nature of the role of principal poses a dilemma for persons aspiring to or occupying this position. Where should their focus be placed? Which aspect of the role is most important? How can one person be expected to be all things to everyone? If one desires to be an effective and successful principal, is there some method of accomplishing all the responsibilities and duties? A broad concept of the principalship defines two major areas of responsibility: management or administration and instruction. The dilemma for practitioners appears to be how to incorporate the myriad tasks and functions of the job in ways that contribute to an effective and successful school.

Literature on the effective school identifies both the administrative and instructional functions of principals as necessary for success with a definite focus on the instructional tasks (Finn, 1987; Lipham, 1981; Manasse, 1982, 1985; Shoemaker & Fraser, 1981). The consensus of researchers as well as practitioners indicates that an essential function of an effective principal is to be the instructional leader in the school. The functions and the image of the effective principal are consistent in the research, but there is a definite discrepancy between the views of the research as to what functions principals should perform and what functions principals actually report carrying out. This is particularly true for the frequent reference to the importance of the principal as the instructional leader in the effectiveness or success of the school.

The importance of an emphasis on the instructional aspect of the principalship is prevalent throughout the literature. If the prime function of schools is to educate, then student learning through sound instructional programs should be a key focus for the principal. But other studies confirm the necessity of both an administrative as well as an instructional component in the role of principal in order for schools to be effective, successful or excellent. This concept is supported by Finn (1987) who reviewed a guide produced by the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the United States which identified qualities necessary for an effective principal. The educational and administrative role aspects were specified as essential. Similarly, Manasse (1982) reviewed studies and concluded that both administrative and instructional performance by the principal contributed to school effectiveness.

A major dilemma appears to revolve around administrative or management behaviours versus the instructional aspect of the principalship. An analysis of the administrative processes and task areas of the school principal by Miklos (1975) identified several components of the role of the principal. The analysis proposed that the instructional aspect of the principal's role should be a primary focus but acknowledged that this was often not the case. Other studies revealed the same conclusion that the image of the principal as an instructional leader did not always occur in practice (Fullan, 1988; Murphy,.1987).

While there is extensive reference to the importance of the instructional function of the principal for school success, the actual nature of the work accomplished by principals indicates a discrepancy. Evidently a discrepancy exists between what is proposed in theory and what is practiced. In a review of literature written by academics and practicing principals, Barth and Deal (1982) identified seven differences in proposed and real activities and highlighted the need for a balance in literature as well as the need to ground academic theory in actual practice. A study by Holdaway (1988) concluded that, although instructional leadership was considered to be essential in school effectiveness, there was only a medium level of principal involvement in tasks related to instructional functions.

The issue is not whether a principal should be an administrator, an instructional leader or both. Where the focus of the principal's energies actually are as opposed to where the focus should be is the area of disagreement between theory and practice. One study proposed that the development of two separate positions, one of instructional leader and one as site administrator could solve the dilemma of instructional versus administrative leadership (Flath, 1989). This unique suggestion implies that the leadership of the school would be shared by more than one person. No doubt problems would not only be solved but also created by such arrangements.

Other sources of research demonstrate the variance between the identified essential element of instructional leadership by the principal and the realistic practices. Flath (1989) questioned whether instructional leadership existed and stated that what is advocated is seldom practiced. She cited lack of time as a factor in hindering principals from fulfilling their instructional role. Greenfield (1982), in a summary of research prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, identified the discrepancy between managerial and instructional functions as a dilemma for principals who generally choose to focus on the administrative aspect of the job. Several factors related to the focussing of attention on organizational maintenance were specified, including: the expectations of superiors; the norms of teachers; the attitudes and abilities of principals; organization size and in-school administrative resources; the nature of the student population; and aspects of the larger community in which schools operate.

The reasons for the discrepancy between the desired role of the principal and the performed tasks are proposed in various studies. Murphy (1987) identified several barriers which impede the instructional role of the principal. The lack of clarity of definition of the instructional aspect of the principalship, principals choosing to accomplish tasks perceived to be more do-able and an absence of priority setting were considered to have a major impact on the instructional leadership role. Fullan (1982, 1988) concurred that principals needed to assume a more proactive role in determining the priorities of their responsibilities. Ginsberg (1988) described seven constraints which restricted the achievement of an instructional role for principals, including a vague definition of leadership, inadequate selection criteria and training programs, the nature of the work day, the lack of knowledge about the technology of teaching, insufficient rewards and incentives and the advent of collective agreements and teacher unions.

Sackney (1980) identified seven dilemmas which confront principals as they strive to achieve school effectiveness. The perceptions of principals compared to actual outcomes were hampered by dilemmas associated with influence and power, teachers, school-community relations, co-operation and trust, conflict resolution, evaluation and staff growth, and decision-making.

Although these studies acknowledged that there were many concerns facing principals and that the instructional and administrative roles of the principal were limited and constrained by various factors, the literature also suggests that it is possible for both aspects of the principalship to be successfully achieved. Several skills and qualities are acknowledged to be characteristics of principals who exhibit effective leadership in all aspects of the role.

Desirable Characteristics of Principals

Determining specific skills, traits and qualities that principals who aspire to be effective should possess is a difficult task. Some analyses have focussed narrowly on one or two key behaviours while others present a broader perspective of behaviours and skills determined to be important in principals. Still other sources in the literature illustrate what the principal should do but few examine what principals actually do. Much of the research focusses on the skills and qualities that principals should have in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities. "Qualities" are general behaviours considered necessary to the principalship while "skills" more precisely define abilities which principals should possess.

Qualities

In describing qualities which principals should have, the literature often refers to behaviours, describes strategies to imply relevant qualities, or presents aspects of leadership with applicable qualities inherent in the models portrayed.

The literature indicates that principals who assume a proactive stance and take control can and do accomplish the instructional and administrative functions of their role. Fullan (1988) identified ten strategies for principals to employ in exerting more control over their role. The guidelines for action include: assuming responsibility for action rather than externalizing blame; avoiding overplanning and overmanaging but acting and doing; selecting important curriculum and instruction priorities for action;

focussing on the professional culture of the school and growth of the teachers; practising fearlessness and risk taking; empowering other members of the school organization; building a vision with a focus on both the content of the vision and the process of implementing the vision; learning to say no to tasks judged to be in opposition to the vision; building allies; and exercising caution when appropriate.

Shoemaker and Fraser (1981) reviewed studies of school effectiveness and focussed on specific actions principals had to perform to make a difference in the success of the school. From these studies they identified four key themes which contribute to school effectiveness: assertive leadership by the principal for achievement; orderly school climate; high expectations for the staff and students; and instructional objectives and evaluation. These themes, or a variation of them, are evident in other studies as well.

Many of the behaviours identified in the literature were condensed by Rutherford (1985) into five qualities for effective principals: having clear, informed visions; translating the visions into reality; developing and maintaining a positive and supportive school climate; monitoring all aspects of the school; supporting and intervening as necessary. Manasse (1985) characterized effective principals as those with the ability to take initiative, model appropriate behaviours and communicate high academic expectations to the students, staff and community. For Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) effective principals demonstrate vision, initiative and resourcefulness.

The concept of a vision is prominent in much of the literature. Vision is described as a direction or purpose for the school generally, defined and communicated by the principal, that includes the development of a plan to achieve the identified goals. The focus of the vision on instructional objectives is consistently identified as essential by many researchers such as Lipham (1981), Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), Fullan (1988), Manasse (1985) and Sergiovanni (1987). To achieve the vision .proposed as necessary, principals require skills in goal planning, priority setting, decision-making, and communicating verbally and in writing. Skills in implementing change are also thought to be valuable (Fullan 1982; Sergiovanni 1987).

Shared leadership has also been identified as a key behaviour for principals. The idea of sharing the principalship with others in the school was proposed as a viable solution to accomplishing the numerous functions facing a principal. Sergiovanni (1987) acknowledged that principals could not carry out the duties and tasks alone. He described the concept of leadership density as including all leadership roles shared among all people associated with schools. For Sergiovanni, principal leadership is an enabling process in which various groups of people share or join in the leadership tasks.

The concept of the principal developing a team approach to fulfilling leadership functions has been supported in various studies. Snyder (1988) described group sharing and networking in the school as a means for principals to manage the complexity of the knowledge and information bases present in the organization. In addition to allowing the principal to coordinate all leadership functions, the integration of many members into the school administrative and instructional activities allows for other leaders to emerge and serves to develop a collegial and collaborative environment.

Finn (1987) judged teamwork to be a characteristic of effective principals who recognized that they could not succeed without the assistance and support of the other members of the school community. Rutherford (1985) identified the use of a leadership team, functional staff committees or peer support teams among the teachers as means through which principals could practise to achieve effective leadership.

Implicit in the literature reviewed was the concept that principals should be persons with initiative and vision who could empower others and collaborate in accomplishing the many duties and responsibilities associated with operating a school. The specific abilities which principals needed are also examined in the literature.

Skills and Abilities

What skills and behaviours would principals be expected to have in order to exemplify the effective qualities described in the literature? In an extensive study examining skills, knowledge and attitudes perceived by Ontario administrators to be important for educational leadership, Gilbert, Biemiller, Fair, Noble, Sheehan, Stewart and Wood (1977) identified an extensive number of skills related to the personal, organizational, interpersonal and teaching-curriculum aspects of educational leadership. Examples include: priority setting, budgeting, timetabling, knowledge of the system and people, communicating, resolving conflicts, teaching ability, evaluation techniques, delegating, managing time, confidence, acquiring and using resources.

In a review of seventy-five studies by Persell and Cookson (1982) similar factors were included in nine recurrent behaviours demonstrated by good principals. These behaviours were:

1. Demonstrating a commitment to academic goals
2. Creating a climate of high expectations
3. Functioning as an instructional leader
4. Being a forceful and dynamic leader
5. Consulting effectively with others
6. Creating order and discipline
7. Marshalling resources
8. Using time well
9. Evaluating results. (p. 22)

Manasse (1982) identified communication skills, analytic and intellectual skills, and political and managerial skills for conflict resolution as necessary for principals to set goals and priorities in the process of formulating and implementing a vision.

A study by Haughey and Rowley (1991) identified an understanding of the change process by principals as being of key importance in initiating and implementing instructional leadership. Fullan (1982), Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) and Sergiovanni (1987) also identified the principal as essential to the successful implementation of change.

Greenfield (1982), in an analysis of school principals, identified six recurring characteristics which he concluded were critical to effective job performance by principals: (a) the ability to work closely with others on a face-to-face basis, (b) the ability to manage conflict and ambiguity, (c) the ability to integrate a cluster of demands competing for the time and attention of principals, (d) the ability to anticipate and adapt to rapidly changing human, social, and environmental conditions, (e) the ability to think and to exercise discretion in formulating action plans and decisions responding to the contingencies of a system in constant motion, and (f) the ability to assess and evaluate the consequences of schooling for children in the light of knowledge regarding effective educational and managerial practices.

Although it is difficult to develop a definitive list of skills and characteristics for effective principals, several sources imply that skills related to building and translating vision, goal setting and implementing, to school climate development, to program and staff evaluation and growth, and to intervention and supporting would be beneficial. Some studies identified specific behaviours while other studies presented skills and abilities perceived to be important by various stakeholders in the educational process. Evidently the effective principal must possess a wide array of human, technical, instructional and symbolic skills to successfully lead the school. Since Catholic school systems have described themselves as distinct, the nature of the Catholic school and implications this has for principals is relevant to this study.

The Mission of the Catholic School

In discussing the Catholic school, the literature tends to refer to the uniqueness or distinctiveness of these schools. The language used in describing the nature of the Catholic school is often metaphorical, is somewhat unfamiliar to many, and may convey different meanings. Terms such as mission, ministry, community, Christ-centered, commitment, witness, service and evangelization are frequently encountered in literature related to Catholic schools.

The mission of the Catholic school is generally understood to be the purpose for the institution, including beliefs, values and underlying principles. Translating the mission into practice includes the specific religious perspective adopted in Catholic schools which is applied to all aspects of the school life and the actions of members involved with Catholic education. The mission and its translation or articulation places many demands and expectations on principals in the Catholic school, who are acknowledged as pivotal to the ability of the school to achieve its mission and to demonstrate a truly unique nature.

The mission or purpose of the Catholic school is derived from both the educational authority and from the Catholic Church. As in any school, the program of a Catholic separate school is expected to conform to the directions of the Ministry or Department of Education. In addition to its educational function, the most distinguishing aspect of the school's mission is its religious dimension which is derived from the Catholic Church.

The Church has made the particular mission of the Catholic school explicit in various documents concerned with Catholic education. In a report regarding the role of lay Catholics in schools, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) discussed the role of the school which together with the Church has a mission to educate the whole person, being especially attentive to the spiritual and faith development of the student and the quality of religious education offered. Specifically identified were the development of judgement, the promotion of a sense of values, the encouragement of a just attitude and proper behaviour, an introduction to the cultural heritage of the Catholic church, the preparation of students for adulthood, and the encouragement of interaction with persons of diverse cultures to promote mutual understanding.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) echoed the Second Vatican Council's declaration that the distinctive quality of the Catholic school was the religious dimension in its document which addressed the religious dimension of Catholic schools. The document proposed that, the religious nature of the school should be present in "a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of the faith" (p. 3). The school's purpose was determined to be within the mission of the Church and presented as one of evangelizing, educating and contributing to the formation of a healthy and morally sound life-style among the members.

Following the direction of the Church, other Catholic educational organizations have also acknowledged and articulated the faith dimension of the Catholic school specifically in individual mission statements. The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (1985) has prepared a Mission Statement which identifies the mission of Catholic schools in Alberta. The document is general in nature and expresses beliefs, values and practices which give meaning to the purpose of Catholic schools in Alberta. The necessity of an appropriate climate so students can develop their religious nature; the synthesis of the human and spiritual development of the student; the presence of a religious perspective in all curricula; the importance of parents and other members of the Catholic community as well the inclusion of other Christians in the educational process are identified in the Mission Statement. In addition to reflecting the purpose of Catholic schools as set out by the Second Vatican Council, the Mission Statement also considers a more local view specific to the Catholic schools of Alberta with the suggestion that the heritage of Alberta Catholic schools be included as discussion topics.

Similarly, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association (1986) has developed a Mission Statement which conforms to the direction of the Second Vatican Council. The Mission Statement mandates that Catholic schools in Ontario must provide quality education integrating faith and culture; create communities of faith recognizing the relational interdependence of all members of the Catholic community both within and outside of the school; reinforce beliefs and values which parents transmit to their children; and fully develop each student physically, spiritually, morally and intellectually. The mission proclaimed by the Church and provincial Trustees' Associations provides a general overview of the purpose of Catholic schools but a more definitive, concrete understanding of the uniqueness may be derived from various other sources in literature.

From one of the documents written by the Catholic Church, The Religious Dimension of Education, Mulligan (1990) interpreted evangelization as the mission of the Catholic school. Acknowledging evangelization as a concept not readily understood, Mulligan defined it as bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to people. Specifically, in the context of the school, evangelization involved facilitating a deeper relationship between students and the person of Jesus. This included assisting students to explore their Catholic heritage and tradition in the discovery of the personal and communal demands inherent in being a Catholic and, consequently, a follower of Christ.

Reilly (1988), O'Brien (1990) and Himsl (1985) described the mission of the Catholic school as being derived from the Church and in terms of Gospel teachings and values. Reilly (1988) in alluding to the importance which the business world has accorded to the concept of mission as a corporate culture, proposed that the Catholic school has an advantage due to the presence of a distinct mission. Reilly's definition of the mission of Catholic schools centers on love for God, for neighbour and for self. From this teaching, Reilly proposed that Catholic schools are charged with the development of people who would follow this precept in all aspects of their lives. O'Brien (1990) contended that the mission of the Catholic school affects the motivation, behaviour and attitude of all involved with Catholic education in a particular way. He also asserted that the conscious presence of Gospel teachings and values is critical in the school and in all programs.

In examining the structures, practices and programs in Catholic schools, Himsl (1985) attempted to define the Gospel-centered mission in a more specific manner. He focussed on the relationship of the elements of faith, hope and love as the basic principles for Catholic education. A partnership of the school, the

Catholic Church, and the family was acknowledged by Himsl who maintained that the Church had a special concern for faith; love was a particular focus of the home, and the school should concentrate on imparting hope to the students. He also identified the Gospel teachings on forgiveness as a basic principle which Catholic schools should adopt. A third tenet to which Himsl directed Catholic schools was to consciously view the children as being created in the image of God or to strive to see Christ in others. For Himsl, hope, forgiveness and the divine nature of people were specific Gospel teachings which should be central to Catholic schools.

Laplante (1985b) developed a lexicon to lend a sense of commonality to the language used in discussing Catholic schools. One of the concepts related to the mission of the Catholic school is the significance of Christian values which should be promoted in Catholic schools. Laplante emphasized the religious values on which Catholic schools should focus as different from human values due to the significance attached to them by the actions and teachings of Christ in the gospels and included freedom, faith, love, hope, God's presence, prayer, attention to the weak, reconciliation-forgiveness, justice, holiness, detachment from the world and death. He identified these values as essential to demonstrating the mission of the Catholic school.

The mission of the Catholic school involves the development of the whole person, with specific attention to its religious dimension. For the Church, this development includes morals, values and beliefs specific to the teachings of the Church as well as evangelization. Trustees' Associations further delineate the mission of the Catholic school to incorporate the educational and faith requirements while attending to the development of beliefs and values and all aspects of student development. The more difficult task rests in articulating the mission of the Catholic school so its distinctive nature is discernible to everyone.

Translating the Mission

In order for the distinctive nature of the Catholic school to be apparent the mission, as stated by various sources, needs to be clearly articulated. Does the Catholic school educate the whole person? What specifically does the Catholic school do which demonstrates that the religious dimension is present in the educational environment? What actions and attitudes are expected of the members of the Catholic school? An examination of the both the academic and religious programs, specific practices, the learning environment and the people involved in Catholic education is essential for demonstrating how Catholic schools implement their unique mission.

The Academic Program

First and foremost, the Catholic school, like other educational institutions, is responsible for an academic educational program. In reviewing literature which discussed the difference in Catholic schools, Kostoff (1986) identified the concept of excellence in education as a principle which Catholic schools have supported throughout their history. He described the Catholic tradition as one which has consistently promoted intellectual growth and development and challenged educators not only to continue to demand academic excellence from students but to encourage the development and use of abilities for the greater good of all society.

Various studies on the effectiveness of Catholic schools confirm that excellent academic programs are offered. In reviewing the results of a study for the Institute for Catholic Education, Murphy (1990) reported that the knowledge of Ontario senior high school students compared favourably with Ontario provincial reviews of chemistry and physics and also with United States assessments of literature and history.

A case study by Ramsay and Clark (1990) in Australia focussed on a Catholic girls' high school to determine the effectiveness of the school in meeting expectations and achieving academic success. Perceptions elicited from students, parents and teachers confirmed that the school was successful in contributing to academic achievement. The personal and spiritual development of students, quality of school life and teaching staff were also credited with influencing the academic achievement of the students.

In a ten year study of senior students in Australia, Flynn (1985) concluded that Catholic schools had both an educational and religious effect on students which impacted positively on academic achievement. He also found that this influence was attributed to the people in the Catholic schools who, through their Christian attitudes, interacted positively and significantly, pursued common goals and implemented discipline policies which provided a definite structure to the educational process.

In reviewing literature related to the effectiveness of Catholic schools in the United States, Bryk and Holland (1984) concluded that the academic achievement in Catholic schools was relatively high. They were commissioned by the National Center for Research in Total Catholic Education (NCEA) to determine what features of the Catholic school contributed to their academic success. Their findings identified the following factors: a heavy emphasis on the academic core curriculum; high expectations by both staff and parents for all students to master a core curriculum regardless of family background or future education plans; the accountability of students for their academic success; a safe and orderly physical environment; a supportive social environment; a dedicated staff who displayed genuine concern for their students; and a consensus of values shared by staff, parents and students. Bryk and Holland made special mention of the sense of community which was reported to exist in Catholic schools regardless of the diversity of students.

Based on the successful achievement of students identified in four studies from three countries, it may be concluded that Catholic schools competently implement their academic mission. Three of the studies identified other factors as important to the effectiveness of the Catholic school. In particular, the religious dimension, the people involved in Catholic education and the organizational environment of the school appeared to have a significant bearing on academic success. The religious dimension of the Catholic school was identified as one of the prime reasons for its existence (Himsl, 1985; Laplante, 1985a; Mulligan, 1990; Reilly, 1988). The programs, practices, people and climate were considered to be important to the religious dimension of Catholic schools

The Religious Dimension

Programs, Practices. One of the more visible characteristics of the Catholic school is the religious program and the presence of specific Catholic rituals, symbols and celebrations throughout the school day. Less evident, although still a component of the mission of the Catholic school, is the emphasis of a religious perspective in all areas of the school curriculum.

A Church document, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (The Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), provides general guidelines for the specific religious education programs in Catholic schools. The expectation is that the guidelines are to be adapted to the local situation by personnel responsible for the educational programs in the schools. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) also emphasized that the religious aspect of the program was not to be restricted to formal religious classes but to be incorporated in all subject areas.

In his study of the effectiveness of Catholic schools in Australia, Flynn (1985) acknowledged that there are formal, informal and out-of-school dimensions to the religious education curriculum of Catholic schools. The formal religious program, identified as involving five content areas of scripture, doctrine, liturgy, life-experience and morality, is a responsibility specific to the religious teacher. The informal curriculum demands the involvement of the total school staff, relates to the religious climate of the school, and includes the quality of the relationships present and the example modelled by all in the school community. The out-of-school dimension of the religious education curriculum referred to retreats, liturgies, service projects, celebrations and other activities.

Flynn (1985) emphasized that the formal religious education curriculum existed within all curricula rather than as a separate component. He listed three important features related to understanding this aspect of the religious education in Catholic schools: (a) strong interrelationships exist between the formal classroom teaching of religious education and the informal dimensions that result in success of the religious education curriculum; (b) the individual level of faith formation for each student is to be carefully considered in all aspects of the religious education curriculum; (c) rather than restricting the religious education curriculum to classroom teaching, it is to be considered in the broader context of the other two dimensions.

Neither Flynn nor the Congregation for Catholic Education provided definitive programs for religious education in Catholic schools nor concrete suggestions on how to integrate the religious concepts into other curriculum. Other sources in the literature indicated that this particular task was difficult to accomplish. During dialogues with colleagues, Mulligan (1990) pursued an identification of the means used to incorporate the religious teachings into other subjects. Although most of the participants acknowledged the importance of linking faith and curriculum, few concrete examples were presented.

In presenting an outline of a philosophy of Catholic education, a document published by the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board indicated that although not easily discernible, an integration of the Catholic perspective exists in various aspects of the curriculum. Particular reference was made to values integrated into science, bioethics discussed in biology, morality as part of family life education and ethical views presented in history.

In a pastoral letter to the Catholic educational community, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (1989) challenged Catholic educators to continue developing curriculum aimed at ensuring that the faith dimension was infused into all areas of curriculum. Carney (1985) suggested that Catholic schools had been negligent in incorporating the art, music, literature, social teachings and other components of the Catholic tradition into the schools. He contended many opportunities exist for frequent reference to the Catholic perspective throughout various curricula of Catholic schools which were being ignored by those responsible for educating the students.

In outlining conditions for enhancing the unique aspects of Catholic schools, O'Brien (1990) identified the presence of religious activities, symbols, scripture and prayer throughout the school as essential. This view was shared by students surveyed by Mulligan (1990) who identified religious symbols, a chapel in the school, crucifixes, religious pictures, liturgies, celebration of the Eucharist, penitential services, the opportunities for retreats, and activities concerned with assisting others less fortunate such as food drives, toy drives and projects to support the Third World, as unique features of a Catholic high school.

Martin (1988) advised schools to ensure that a high value was placed on the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgies and on retreats and reflection days so that the spiritual dimension of Catholic schools could be preserved and improved. Lesko (1988), in an ethnographic study of an American high school, focussed on the significance of an all-school Mass. She proposed that the prayers, songs, participation of the students and extensive preparations for the celebration indicated the central importance of this liturgy. She indicated that the use of collective rituals emphasized values which gave a uniqueness to the school, and she accorded an importance to the integration of values for the life of an organization.

The programs and practices in Catholic schools provided visible evidence of the distinct characteristic in the educational organization. Other, less tangible unique features were found to exist in the school climate and the personnel involved in Catholic education.

Community. The Catholic school is charged with providing an educational climate in which the religious nature of the school can be presented (The Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). The school has been described as a faith community, a supportive environment, a partnership, and a welcoming community. Some sources provide general references to the nature of the faith while others are more explicit and describe visible symbols, practices and interactions of community members.

The Ontario Bishops (1989) challenged Catholic educators to build a genuine faith community, linked to people in the local parish and the wider universal Catholic Church, that encourages every person to live according to the Christian values which are often counter to those existing in today's society. For O'Brien (1990) it was essential that the Catholic school be viewed and thought of as a faith community where mutual support ensures maintenance and growth and where Gospel values are present in all subject areas and relationships. Martin (1988) described the Catholic school as a welcoming community where the interactions of members attest to the presence of Christian charity and visitors perceive a family atmosphere which reflects the values of caring, sharing and mutual consent to solve conflicts in a humane manner.

A definition of faith community was offered by Laplante (1985b), who contended that the presence of such an atmosphere in Alberta Catholic schools contributes to the achievement of their mission. Three characteristics of a Christian community were identified by Laplante: (a) the members are linked by a search for faith, (b) their lifestyle reflects aspects of their faith, and (c) the community remains open to all in the world. Visible signs of the faith community were considered to include communal prayer; religious art; genuine hospitality towards community members and strangers; and the encouragement of competence in human relationships and academic endeavours. Laplante asserted that Catholic schools need to deliberately focus on interpersonal skills such as respect; tolerance; appreciation of others; and the ability to live with, communicate with, and celebrate with others.

The most definitive source for the concept of the community aspect of Catholic schools was derived from the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988). Factors contributing to the school atmosphere, including persons, space, time, relationships, teaching, study, and various other activities, were specifically applied to Catholic schools infused with the Gospel teachings of freedom and love.

In discussing the physical dimension of the school environment, the Church document emphasized the importance of developing a sense of responsibility in the students for the care of the facility and the presence of symbols to foster an awareness of Christ as the center of the Catholic school. Of significance is attention to the image of Mary who, as the Mother of God, could assist the school in creating a home-like atmosphere. A warm, intimate family atmosphere was specifically designated as important for elementary schools where a spirit of trust, spontaneity and an emphasis on collaboration between the school and the home are thought to be essential.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) constantly refers to the Catholic school as an open community rather than an institution. The school is considered to be an instrument of the Church with a specific responsibility to promote collaboration for building a partnership between the school, the home, and the local and universal Catholic Church. Through the strength and mutual support of all members, educational goals and faith formation of the students can be realized.

The relationship of the school to civic and international authorities was also identified as a communal dimension of the Catholic school. The promotion of respect for government and its representatives, observance of just laws, and the search for the common good are to be reflected in the school atmosphere; educational aims are to include civic values of freedom, justice, nobility of work and the need to pursue social progress; the celebration of important national and civic events and actions are to present a relationship between the state and school. The illustration of the Church teachings on social justice and peace through appropriate actions is emphasized to promote a connection of the Catholic school and the wider, international society.

The obligation to become involved in partnerships with the home, the Church, civic, national, and international societies imposes a great responsibility on those charged with establishing an appropriate community in Catholic schools. Sources in the literature confirmed that some aspects of this community building task are being accomplished.

In an American study of 20 schools and 161 classrooms, Bryk and Holland (1984) examined distinctive features of effective Catholic schools. They found that a sense of community is manifested in orderly and safe physical environments, in supportive social environments and in an apparent consensus of values.

In addition to generating a source of pride for the staff and the students who share the value of respect for the institution, attention and co-operation devoted to the maintenance of the physical environment promotes a strong sense of tradition, stability and affiliation. The researchers described the supportive social environment as one in which students are active participants in the teaching-learning process; teachers demonstrate interest in students, by exhibiting patience, understanding and firmness while remaining committed to high standards; mutual respect is evident between staff and students; parents are involved in school activities; and the staff supports family-held values. Bryk and Holland (1984) identified the presence of a shared set of values which influence school aims, social responsibility, and standards of behaviour as a third feature contributing to the community dimension of Catholic schools.

In a study of Catholic students in Australia, Flynn (1985) stated that the most effective Catholic schools are distinguished by an outstanding social climate which provides a special ethos or spirit to the organization, supports community members and contributes to deeper personal and faith relationships. Critical to the formation of the Christian community is the infusion of Christian values and Gospel teachings into all aspects of the school life. The researcher reported that students credited staff interest and concern as a positive influence on morale. Flynn (1985) also concluded that the sense of community in Catholic schools had an unexpected positive effect on the academic achievement of the students.

As a result of conversations with Ontario high school students, Mulligan (1990) contended that a faith community is important to adolescents and could be beneficial for the internalization of values and ethics which form a basis for their lives and actions. Students who had experiences in both a public school and a Catholic one, acknowledged the significance of an authentic Christian community and used descriptors such as "spirit, bonding together, family and common atmosphere based on our faith" (p. 157) in discussing this outstanding, distinguishing characteristic.

When the Catholic school is described as a faith community, frequent reference focusses on the people involved in the development of the atmosphere which was identified as a distinguishing feature of Catholic schools. The "witness" or commitment of the teachers was central to the creation and development of a Christian community.

Commitment. In their pastoral letter on Catholic education, the Bishops of Ontario (1989) indicated that the teacher has the greatest direct impact on students and challenged them to ensure that their actions follow the Gospel teachings. In his interviews with high school students in Ontario, Mulligan (1990) found that the students placed much emphasis on the authenticity and commitment of teachers and had little difficulty in identifying those staff members who did not present themselves as a true Christian member of the school. Expectations for Catholic teachers go beyond professional competence and encompass all requirements of a truly Christian life.

Flynn (1985) suggested that teachers in Catholic schools should view their work as a ministry of Catholic education with a responsibility to provide a genuine example to their students. Within the school community, the presence of elements such as friendship, loyalty, generosity and helpfulness is essential for both teachers and students to develop a commitment to the faith life and mission of the Catholic school.

O'Brien (1990) acknowledged the importance of the presence of "people of faith" as critical in the evolution of the faith community of the Catholic school and specified teachers as a key element. Through attitudes, speech, actions, behaviour and relationships with others in the school teachers demonstrate commitment to the Christian community and the mission of the Catholic school.

In reviewing literature concerned with the Catholic school, Kostoff (1986) reported that students generally encountered a visible portrayal of Christian values and ethics in the teachers within the school. He asserted that students are also obligated to exhibit commitment and witness to their faith dimension and do so through social awareness activities such as visiting the elderly, working in food banks, and writing letters and petitions. Living out the faith elements taught and taking one's faith out of the school into the larger community demonstrates faith formation and commitment.

Bryk and Holland (1984) identified the dedication and commitment of the faculty who served multiple roles in the Catholic system as contributing to the effectiveness of Catholic schools. They reported that teachers understood that their roles were more than providing academic instruction; possessed an awareness of their membership in a Christian community and the responsibilities inherent in that role; and displayed genuine concern for the kind of person their students would become through a focus on all aspects of their growth and development.

In his lexicon, Laplante (1985b) discussed the relevance of faith commitment and the ministry of teaching to the Christian community and mission of the Catholic schools. He emphasized that it was important to provide students with examples of outward behaviours which illustrated meaningful witnessing to one's faith and fulfilled the ministry role of teaching, defined as a means to signify Christian service. He urged teachers to assume the additional responsibilities inherent in their position by exhibiting the qualities identified with the role of ministry and which included a teacher who cares, is knowledgeable, listens actively, is fair and just, challenges students, is enthusiastic, and teaches the faith.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) identified the task of the lay educator as one of offering to students a concrete example of the ideal person so that students could perceive such behaviour as authentic and in turn would be persuaded to imitate it. Teachers were urged to exhibit Christian attitudes and behaviour through direct and personal contact with students, colleagues, parents and other members of the Christian community. The Church document stressed the importance of the teachers' active participation in liturgical and sacramental activities of the school both to provide a model to students and to nurture their personal commitment. In order for the faith community to grow, those involved in the community needed to share their commitment to the Christian values and ethics underlying the mission of the Catholic schools.

The translation of the mission of the Catholic school occurs in many ways. The programs, both academic and religious, specific practices such as liturgies and social awareness activities, visible symbols, the human relationships experienced in the school, the fostering of an atmosphere based on Christian values and ethics, and the genuine commitment of the staff and students of the Christian community all contribute to making the mission of the Catholic school explicit and real.

Just as principals in other educational organizations assume responsibility for leadership in their schools, so the leadership of the principal of the Catholic school is considered to be significant. In examining the nature of the Catholic school, its mission, and the translation of that mission into authentic programs, several implications for principals of these institutions become apparent.

Implications for Principals of Catholic Schools

As with the language describing the mission of the Catholic school, specific terms are used to discuss the impact on principals of translating the mission. Sources in the literature refer to concepts of stewardship, service, and vocation. Many expectations for principals of Catholic schools are presented which are in addition to the demands placed on administrators in non-Catholic schools. Qualities considered necessary to performing the functions of a Catholic principal are also identified.

Expectations of Principals in Catholic Schools

Several sources in the literature proposed that the role of a principal in a Catholic school places additional responsibilities on the person occupying the position. Reilly (1988) acknowledged that the tasks confronting principals in Catholic schools are overwhelming and difficult to perform. In describing the type of person needed to lead Catholic schools, Drahmann (1984) indicated that expectations were so great that someone like God might be best suited to the role! A leadership that went beyond normal expectations was considered inherent in the Catholic school principal (Miklos, 1982) while Mulligan (1990) accorded the pivotal role of the principal of the Catholic school as an "awesome privilege and responsibility" (p. 256).

The enormity of the task is best summarized by O'Brien (1988) who described Catholic school principals as "participants in, servants of, and chief emissaries for a school system with a distinct mission" (p. 19). He further identified the mission of the Catholic school as bearing great influence on the performance, motivation and outlook of principals in a way which distinguishes them from their secular public school counterparts.

In addition to having responsibility for the instructional and administrative aspects of the organization, the principal of a Catholic school is expected to be the religious or spiritual leader in the school. Flynn (1985) described the Catholic school principal as a symbol of hope and inspiration for those in the school community which includes students, parents, staff and external community members. The notion of Catholic school principals as servants was proposed by Grecco (1989) and Martin (1988). Servant leadership implies reaching out to community members to support, encourage and empower them to share in the implementation of the mission of the Catholic school. Mulligan (1990) identified Catholic school principals as "the teaching Church in the context of the school" (p. 255) and he termed their profession a vocation or calling, implying the need for more than that demanded of colleagues in the public schools. Principals are accorded the responsibility of transforming the school community into a faith community through their profound commitment and witness to the Gospel teachings and mission of the Catholic school.

The concept of transformational leadership was addressed by other writers (Garvey, 1985; Miklos, 1982; Ramsay & Clark, 1990). Miklos described the process needed for principals to institutionalize the values of the Catholic school so that essential values permeate the school operation and are reflected in the actions and behaviour of the members of the school community. Ramsay and Clark (1990), in a case study of an Australian Catholic high school, recognized the principal of this particular school as an example of one who institutionalized the vision into the organization. The authors asserted that the principal exhibited leadership which was described as transforming since she was successful in appealing to the higher order needs of the members of the community, eliciting their active involvement and commitment to the mission of the school.

For Garvey (1985), the Catholic school principal is the instrument needed to convert the school from a secular institution to one centered on the Gospel teachings and modelling the example of Christ. Garvey further pointed out the difficulty of performing this type of leadership especially for lay principals. He stated that with the departure of religious members from the role of principals in Catholic schools, the task of spiritual leadership was being assumed by lay people without the same degree of spiritual development and personal faith formation.

Three images of leadership were discussed by Trafford (1989): mentor, facilitator and visionary. He determined that the leader of a Catholic school is best described as a visionary whose prime function is the articulation and implementation of the vision and values of the Catholic school. The principal's commitment to the teachings and tradition of the Church is essential for the values of community, faith, hope, and courage to be reflected in the school climate; in policies such as discipline, teacher and student evaluation; and in interpersonal relationships within and outside the school.

O'Brien (1988) outlined six expectations of the principal of the Catholic school: be educational stewards of Christ and the Church; provide Christian dimension and leadership; build community in the schools; promote good ministry; respect others as divine creations; and encourage faith development. For principals to assume an active role in the mission of the Catholic school, O'Brien outlined various tasks to be performed such as ensuring an awareness of the mission, in particular the Mission Statement of a school system. From the general outlines of the Board Mission Statement, principals are charged with developing a derivative statement of a vision for their school.

The growth of the faith community and the formation of those in the community is to be incorporated in the school goals through the articulation of concrete initiatives. Principals are to ensure that religious education objectives are integrated into all school curricula and that teachers are attentive to the teaching of Christian values in all phases of the instructional program. Personal faith and spiritual development is to be facilitated through workshops, retreats and community activities aimed at strengthening the faith dimension of the school.

Included in staff meetings and parent-teacher meetings should be discussions on faith and Christian living issues. The school atmosphere and interpersonal relationships are to reflect respect for each individual as a child of God and acceptance of each person as one with a unique individual personality, makeup and limitations. Principals are expected to foster a sense of togetherness and collaboration with staff, students, parents and other members of the faith community.

The descriptions of the principal as a spiritual and religious leader responsible for transforming the school from a secular organization to a faith community poses many expectations and demands on the person assuming the leadership of the Catholic school. Many tasks have been identified as the responsibility of the Catholic school principal which illustrate an additional burden. The role of a Catholic school principal appears to be lofty, perhaps even impossible. Indications from sources in the literature reviewed are that such persons do exist and they possess various qualities which enable them to accomplish the tasks inherent in the role of the principal of a Catholic school.

Qualities Desirable for Catholic School Principals

Sources in the literature acknowledge that principals in Catholic schools need all the skills and qualities identified as relevant for their colleagues in non-Catholic schools. There appears to be some consensus on certain qualities which are significant as well as individual traits and skills identified by one or two writers.

The elements of vision and commitment were recognized as two of the most pertinent qualities for principals in Catholic schools. Miklos (1982) identified vision and commitment as two of five components of leadership considered to be essential for effective leadership. He contended that principals had to give careful thought and attention to what they wanted their schools to be and to demonstrate commitment to the goals through their actions.

For Trafford (1989), Catholic school principals need the ability to define, articulate and implement the vision for Catholic schools. The commitment of the Catholic school principal to the goals and the heritage and teachings of the Church was an important quality which together with vision would enable the school administrator to achieve the distinct mission of the Catholic school.

Vision and commitment were cited by Reilly (1988) as necessary for the principal to become a leader of others who would share in the leadership of the Catholic school. In examining selection criteria for choosing principals of Catholic schools, Reilly indicated that not only were the qualities normally associated with leadership necessary but also additional criteria such as commitment to the common goals of the Catholic school and a vision by which to empower others in the Christian community to participate as leaders.

Colleagues in Mulligan's study (1990) perceived vision and commitment to be significant. A vision of what Catholic education means, an understanding of the mission of the Catholic school and the energy and ability to work hard to translate the vision into a reality were considered important for principals of Catholic high schools. The personal faith of the individual was judged to be critical for commitment to fulfilling the vision.

In addition to vision and commitment, several sources indicated the need for a deep personal faith as well as an awareness that the spiritual and faith development must be ongoing (Augenstein, 1984; Garvey, 1985; Martin, 1988; Mulligan, 1990; O'Brien, 1988; Reilly, 1988). Martin (1988) identified the personal faith and spiritual development of the principal of the Catholic school as important but concluded that determining the presence of these qualities was difficult since the religious dimension of a person is not easily articulated or evaluated. He described the necessity for principals to be able to care for the staff and students in a Christian sense, to reach out to the members of the community through interpersonal contact. Martin deemed essential the ability of the principal to share leadership with others through consultation and collaboration. Being visible both in school situations and outside of the school such as when someone was hospitalized or had experienced bereavement was a third quality considered important for Catholic school principals.

Drahmann (1984) described the principal of a Catholic school as a dedicated and caring individual with personal faith which assisted in sustaining and motivating the person to assume the role of spiritual leader. In addition to generally recognized skills and abilities for principals, Drahmann emphasized the importance of political skills to cope with the various members of the school and surrounding school community.

Augenstein (1988) surveyed 107 beginning principals with one to three years of experience in Catholic schools regarding their perceptions of key qualities. The three most identified traits were persons with deep personal faith, good human relations skills and authentic witnesses to the mission of the Catholic school.

Another common element among various authors is the concept of service (Martin, 1988; Mulligan, 1990; Reilly, 1988; Trafford, 1990). Reilly (1988) asserted that the ability to serve others encompassed many of the functions of a leader such as informing, supporting, reinforcing, clarifying, and resolving disputes. Trafford (1990) identified the servant nature of the principal to be part of the requirements for a visionary principal in the Catholic school.

Mulligan (1990) and Garvey (1985) interpreted the principal's ability to serve and enable the staff, students and parents as part of the function of ministry in the Catholic school. For Garvey (1985) the service aspect of the principal is particularly important to develop the Christian community of the school. Mulligan (1990) indicated the need for the Catholic school principal to exercise service as opposed to authority and considered humility and the ability to collaborate as additional qualities these principals should have.

Vision, commitment, personal faith, continued spiritual development and service are qualities considered significant for principals in Catholic schools. These are either in addition to qualities and skills generally identified as important in any leader or are discussed from a religious perspective.

The distinct nature and mission of the Catholic school with the spiritual dimension which is infused into all aspects of the organization, place higher expectations on those called to assume the position of principal. Responsibility for the development of a faith community demands vision, commitment, personal faith and witness, humility, service and other qualities and abilities.

The principal of the Catholic school is a religious leader to the school community which is comprised of the staff, students, parents and members of the wider Christian community who have contact with the school. The position of Catholic school principal is referred to as a vocation and a ministry of the Church, carrying with it immense responsibilities and expectations. Indications in some of the literature are that many individuals ware able to fulfill effectively the demands asked and provided authentic Catholic schools in which staff, students and parents grow and develop together in a spiritual community.

Chapter Summary

Two major themes guided the review of relevant literature: the nature of a principalship and the mission of the Catholic school.

The nature of the principalship incorporated formal definitions of the role, images of the principal found in various sources of the literature and dilemmas encountered by principals attempting to address the multifaceted nature of the position. Qualities and skills believed desirable for principals significant to performing the tasks of a principals were identified.

The nature of the Catholic school focussed on defining and translating the distinctive mission of Catholic schools. The academic program, school practices, a sense of community and staff commitment articulated the Catholic school mission and presented added expectations for principals in these schools. The religious dimension of the Catholic school demanded that its principals assume the role of religious or spiritual leader as well as other functions associated with the principalship. Personal faith commitment, witness and vision are significant qualities which assisted Catholic school principals to successfully fulfill job expectations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter are described the design of the study and the selection of the participants. Detailed data collection procedures, including the main research strategy used, and methods of analysis are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a section addressing issues of the trustworthiness of the research.

Design of the Study

The study used qualitative methods to describe the role of principals and to identify components relevant to a preparation program for principals. The main data source consisted of semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants employed in an Ontario Catholic school district. The respondents were selected from among the school district's senior administrators, practicing principals, and those persons holding Ministry of Education principal qualifications who had demonstrated aspirations for a principalship.

The content of the interviews was based on questions related to the main functions of a principal, personal qualities and skills relevant to the performance of the identified functions, and leadership experiences considered applicable to gaining practice and to developing skills associated with a principalship. Separate interview guides for each of the categories of personnel are included in the appendices (Appendices A, B and C).

Selection of Participants

The fifteen participants for this study were purposively chosen from the qualified personnel in the Lakehead District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. The school district serves approximately 7500 students in twenty-three schools categorized as elementary (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 or Grade 8), senior elementary (Grades 7 and 8) and high school (Grades 9 to OAC). Grade 13 has been replaced with courses entitled Ontario Academic Credits (OAC), required for the pursuit of university studies.

Permission to conduct the study was sought by following the appropriate Board policy related to research activities. A letter outlining the purpose of the study as well as the type and number of participants required was sent to the Director of Education in December, 1988. Permission was granted, and a senior administrator was appointed as the Board supervisor of the study.

The senior administrators within the school district were interviewed to ascertain specific selection criteria, such as personal qualities and skills for principals; related leadership experience that this particular school system considered to be of importance when selecting principals; and components of a preparation program for aspiring principals viewed as appropriate for this specific school system. Three of four available senior administrators were chosen for their experience in several areas of education. All had been in the employ of the Board for at least ten years. Two of the administrators had a background in elementary education while the third participant had experience at both the high school level and with the Ministry of Education. Two of the participants had experience as a director of education, the chief executive officer of Ontario school systems. In addition to school supervisory duties, two of the participants were also responsible for matters dealing with personnel and with student services, a department whose major concern is special education issues. These three individuals had the knowledge and experience considered necessary for providing data relevant to the purposes of this study.

The participants were contacted in writing to request their co-operation. Receipt of the reply was followed by a personal telephone call to confirm the willingness to participate and to arrange interview dates for February, 1989 (see Appendix D). An interview guide was sent to the participants prior to the scheduled interview time (see Appendix A).

To understand the actual demands of the job of a principal, interviews were conducted with principals practicing within the identified school district. In addition to the specific tasks performed by the principals, their insights regarding desirable personal qualities and skills, and experience relevant to the principalship, as well as preparation program components and delivery modes were sought.

The criteria used in selecting principals for the study included the various types of schools operated by the school board; the different instructional programs such as French Immersion and Special Education classes; both men and women; different degrees of experience as a principal. Based on their experience, knowledge and co-operativeness as well as the preceding factors these particular principal participants seemed adequate for the purpose of this study.

Six principals were purposively selected from a total population of twenty-three in the district. Their experience in the principalship, which ranged from two to twenty-six years, had all been gained within this school system, although two had come from other school boards to assume the principalship. The four men and two women interviewed practiced in a variety of schools. Three principals were in elementary schools (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6), two were in senior elementary schools (Grades 7 and 8), and one was the principal of a large high school (Grade 9 to OAC). Five of the six principals had vice-principals assigned to their schools while the sixth one had a teacher designate, a staff member identified as responsible in the absence of the principal. The different types and sizes of their schools, as well as the level of experience of the participants, reflected all segments of the school system.

All of the principals were contacted by telephone to determine their willingness to participate. The purpose of the study as well as an outline of the interview questions were discussed at this time with confidentiality and anonymity assured (see Appendix B). Verbal consent was obtained from all of the initially selected participants and interviews were held during the latter part of April and the first week of May, 1989.

In order to determine the needs and expectations of those aspiring to the position of principal, interviews were conducted with persons identified as seeking a principalship. The questions focussed on personal preparation for a career leading to a principalship. In addition, a determination of the aspiring principals' understanding of which qualities, skills and experiences would be of benefit to performing the functions associated with the principalship was sought. The expectations of aspiring principals regarding the components and delivery modes of a system level principal preparation program were also of interest.

The selection of participants identified as persons aspiring to the principalship was more difficult than the previous two categories of personnel. Aspiring candidates were defined as those members of staff holding Ministry of Education principal qualifications and having actively demonstrated their interest in a principalship through participation in system competitions for the position of vice-principal or principal. These individuals were identified through discussions with the school board's appointed supervisor of the study; the researcher's personal knowledge of people in the school system also influenced the selection.

In order to determine prospective or potential participants, information indicating who was qualified to apply for principalships according to the Ministry of Education regulations was necessary. Since the responsibility for submitting a record of qualifications to the school system rested with each individual, an exact number was impossible to determine. A list of thirty-three candidates was prepared which included persons in positions of responsibility such as coordinators, consultants and vice-principals as well as classroom teachers. Due to the specific nature of the study, those currently holding a position of responsibility such as that of coordinator or consultant were excluded because they had not demonstrated interest in the principalship. A sample of six participants was purposively chosen from a total of twenty vice-principals and classroom teachers who had entered system competitions for the principalship or vice-principalship within the last three years.

The criteria for selecting participants within the aspiring principal category included a balance of men and women; participants with vice-principal experience as well as prospective principals not yet in a position of added responsibility; participants teaching in all four divisions; participants from a variety of types of school operations; and participants knowledgeable of the expectations of the school system for principals. The selected participants fit the defined criteria. and were deemed to be appropriate by the researcher.

The six participants, three of whom currently held a vice-principalship in addition to teaching responsibilities, included three men and three women. The respondents represented all four teaching divisions: one was in a secondary school (Grades 9 to OAC), two were in intermediate schools (Grades 7 and 8), two taught in the junior division (Grades 4, 5, 6), and one was a primary teacher (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3). Of the three vice-principals, two were in schools offering Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 while the third was in a large elementary school with programs from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. The teaching and vice-principalship experience of the six participants had been gained within this particular school system. The aspiring principals included participants who spanned the entire teaching spectrum and offered a balance of persons, both in and not yet in, a vice-principalship, actively seeking a principalship.

Through telephone contact, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the nature of the interview questions (see Appendix C). Confidentiality and anonymity were assured prior to obtaining the verbal consent to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted during the latter part of April and the first week of May, 1989.

Data Collection

Choice of Method

Due to the in-depth nature of the information sought and the convenience of the procedure for the participants, the interview technique was chosen for the collection of data. The interview technique provided the researcher with the opportunity to clarify and explain the intent of the questions where necessary, which reduced the possibility of any misinterpretation of the questions. The interview format also facilitated probing to ensure thorough answers and complete data. This procedure more readily facilitated the collection of detailed information since little was required of the participants. The use of an interview process accommodated the collection of data specific to the particular school system from persons knowledgeable in matters related to the school board. The interview offered a method of gathering both more specific and a wider range of information than a questionnaire. The participants were permitted to clarify and explain their responses which resulted in richer data being collected. Since the researcher was familar with most of the personnel in the selected school district, a rapport and relationship already existed which facilitated the use of the interview technique.

Focus of the Interview

Separate interview guides were developed for each of the sets of participants. Common to all three guides were questions aimed at determining the personal qualities and skills and experiences considered critical to the performance of the tasks of a principal as well as an indication of the content and delivery modes which could be incorporated into a training program for persons aspiring to the position of principal. Supplementary questions were posed to each of the groups interviewed to elicit data pertinent to that specific group.

The interview guide for the senior administrators (Appendix A) incorporated a total of five questions designed to identify the criteria used in selecting principals as well as a perspective on pre-service training needs for principals of the school system. The interview guide was sent to the participants prior to the interview date; two of the three administrators had prepared notes to which they referred during the interview.

As well as answering the questions regarding personal qualities and skills, experience and program needs, practicing principals were asked to discuss the role of the principal. Using the specific responsibilities of principals outlined in the Terms of Reference in the school system's Policy Manual and the categories for evaluating a principal, the interviewees were asked to describe the demands of the job in the following areas: administration, curriculum, supervision, public relations and communications, Catholic educational leadership and staff development. A total of five questions guided the interviews with the principals participating in this study (Appendix B).

The understanding and expectations of those aspiring to a principalship within the school system were the focus of five questions presented to those persons in that position (Appendix C). As with the other two categories of participants, questions were concerned with the personal qualities and skills and experience relevant for candidates seeking a principalship, as well as the content and delivery modes which could be included in a pre-service training program. The personal preparation of each of the aspiring principals was also addressed to determine whether the school system's expectations for principals were clearly understood by those seeking the position. A second purpose in obtaining data from this group, was to attempt to explain possible gaps between the knowledge and skills that principals should have and that which prospective candidates actually possessed. Data of this type were relevant to identifying training needs which could be incorporated into a pre-service program.

Pilot Interview

Since the effectiveness of the interviews was critical to the study, a trial interview was conducted with a practicing principal. Although all three groups had different questions, the importance of the target issues of the personal qualities and skills, experience and pre-service program content and delivery modes was a common concern. The pilot interview with a practicing principal was conducted by the researcher in early February, 1989 in order to verify that the guide was addressing relevant issues as well as to provide the researcher with some practice in conducting interviews.

The pilot interview guide consisted of four broad questions designed to determine the actual tasks in the job of the principal, personal qualities and skills considered relevant in responding to the demands of the principal's role, academic background which assisted the principal in performing the job, and desirable or beneficial components of a pre-service program for prospective principals.

From the transcription and preliminary examination of the participant's responses, the interview guide for principals was restructured to reflect the specific task areas of principals in this particular school system. A question related to academic background was changed to one which would determine relevant experiences that persons aspiring to the principalship should endeavour to attain. As well, wording in the interview guides was refined to ensure that the desired meaning was conveyed. Probes and key phrases were included in the researcher's copy of the interview schedule to facilitate the collection of thorough and relevant data. Appendix B contains a copy of the final version of the guide.

The Interviews

Tape-recorded, semi-structured interviews, supplemented by handwritten notes, were conducted by the researcher with all participants except one who preferred not to have the interview recorded. For this latter participant, detailed in-depth notes of the interview were made by the researcher. The initial questions provided the interviewees with opportunities to contribute supplementary data where they were inclined to provide such information. The interviews varied in length from forty minutes to almost two hours. Journal entries, made by the researcher following each interview, recorded personal reflections and reactions to the process.

The effective utilization of interview time was assumed to be of utmost importance to the respondents, especially the senior administrators and the practicing principals, as was establishing an interview site convenient for the participants. All but two of the interviews were conducted in the offices or schools of the participants. This ensured that they did not have to allocate time to travel in addition to that requested for the interview and also enabled them to be available to respond to demands of their position should such situations arise. In the case of the two interviews not carried out at schools, one was held in the home of the participant and the other took place in the researcher's home.

No major difficulties were experienced during the collection of the data. Prior existence of a positive rapport between the researcher and the respondents facilitated the interview process and eliminated the need to establish an initial relationship. In some instances, responses were lengthy and tended to wander off the topic at hand. The researcher experienced no difficulty in redirecting the participants to the main topic. During the transcript of some interviews, irrelevant sections were omitted; notations in the transcripts indicated where this occurred.

Most of the tapes were audible and easy to transcribe. Small sections of the interviews which were inaudible were noted in the transcripts. For a portion of one interview, where some of the dialogue was inaudible, the researcher's handwritten notes were sufficient to permit a complete transcript to be prepared. The narrative for the one interview which was not tape-recorded was constructed wholly from the researcher's written notes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Verbatim transcribing of the interview tapes was the initial step in the analysis process. The tapes were organized into the three categories of participants with the senior administrator interviews transcribed first, followed by those of the practicing principals' and then those of the aspiring principals'. Each group was assigned an identification code and number. Senior administrators were designated SA/01, SA/02, and SA/03. The lettered code for practicing principals was PP and these transcripts were numbered from 01 to 06. Aspiring principals were identified as AP/01 to AP/06.

Each set of transcripts was analyzed separately using categories which were derived from the interview guides and from the research questions. Since all the participants were asked about personal qualities and skills, experience, and pre-service program content and delivery modes, these were used as broad categories in the analysis of the interview transcripts.

Additional categories were determined specific to each group of participants. Data from the senior administrators were examined for principal selection criteria under sub-categories of qualifications, education and experience. For the practicing principals the categories for each of the six task areas were administration, curriculum, supervision, public relations and communications, Catholic educational leadership and staff development. The personal preparation of aspiring principals was a broad category which was divided into sub-categories of academic, leadership experience and "other", which included teaching experience as well as data which did not fit into the previous sub-categories. The use of large charts with category headings allowed data in the form of key words or phases from each respondent to be entered in the appropriate columns. The identification code of the respondent and the corresponding transcript page number, written beside the responses, facilitated immediate retrieval of pertinent comments.

Although practicing principals were the only group specifically questioned about the role of the principal, the interviews conducted with the senior administrators of the system had some impact on the categorization of data regarding the role of the principal. Preliminary analysis of the data from the interviews with senior administrators, conducted prior to those with practicing principals, prompted the researcher to revise the questions related to the functions of the principal so that they focussed on specific task areas.

From the initial listing of each respondent's actual words, data which were similar in meaning were reorganized and clustered. For example, under the category of personal qualities and skills, responses included words such as approachable, genuine, pleasant, sincere, open, honest and friendly. A reordering of concepts resulted in one cluster containing approachable, pleasant, open and friendly while honest, sincere and genuine were placed in another category. This strategy allowed for more refined comparisons within and between the three participant groups.

Data concerned with the functions of principals in the areas of administration, public relations and communications, and Catholic educational leadership were relatively easy to catalogue. The responses in these three categories clearly fell into the designated clusters, and it was not necessary to come to a decision regarding the category into which specific answers were placed. For the categories of curriculum, supervision and staff development, such was not the case. Several respondents referred to the interrelationship of these three areas. Responses often overlapped into one or more of these categories, at times necessitating the inclusion of data in more than one category.

The broad categories were further grouped to identify specific items within each area and catalogued using the same identification system as in the preliminary analysis. For example, some of the sub-categories related to experience included school level experience, system level experience, teachers' federation experience, community experience and other experience which included work outside of the educational setting.

Initially, comparisons of responses within each group of participants were made to identify commonalities followed by an examination of the data from all respondents. In the case of the categories shared by all the participants, individual category charts, listing the data and indicating individual responses by group using the participant coding system, facilitated further analysis.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Once the data were organized into charts listing categories and sub-categories, the designation of items to specific categories was reviewed by two educators, a peer and a person from outside the university setting. This process involved an examination by the educators of the data; suggestions for the placement of specific information into the existing categories; and confirmation of the designation of the data into the specific categories.

Although the educators were generally in agreement with the organizational categories and sub-categories, some suggestions were incorporated into the analysis of the data. For instance, in placing the qualities and skills identified as relevant to the principalship, the suggestions offered by the educator from outside the university setting resulted in a change in the number of broad categories. Originally the researcher had categorized the data into four broad categories: interpersonal, human interactions, personal and organizational. Based on discussions with the educator the final categorization for the data utilized three categories: interpersonal, personal, and organizational. Further examination by the peer of the researcher confirmed the suitability of three rather than four broad categories. Thus, discussions of the analysis assisted the researcher with the development of the final categorization of data as well as in the verification of the findings.

A form of triangulation of the data was possible due to the use of three separate groups of personnel which provided multiple sources of data and facilitated cross-checking of items especially in specific areas. Additional referential materials were collected from the school district which included the Policy Manual of the school district, a presentation by the Director of Education to the local principals, and copies of the newsletter which the central office of the school system distributed to parents and other constituents. These methods enhanced the credibility of the findings which were further substantiated by the field notes, tapes and transcripts retained during this study.

An audit log was kept in which personal thoughts and reactions throughout the data collection and analysis stages of the study were recorded by the researcher. In instances where information relevant to some participants was noted in the journal, the researcher was able to pose additional questions to other participants so that certain details could be corroborated and complete data ensured. For example, as was mentioned in the data analysis section, preliminary analysis of interviews with the senior administrators contributed to collecting data from principals regarding specific functions of their job. This form of reflexivity was intended to contribute to the confirmability of the study.

Applicability or generalizability, was not a major concern in the design of this study since the data collection and the findings were confined to one specific school system. Nevertheless, members of other school systems may find the results relevant to their circumstances.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to recommend proposals for inclusion in the pre-service training of persons aspiring to the principalship in one particular system in Ontario. Data for the study were collected through semi-structured interviews including three separate sets of participants: senior administrators responsible for the selection of successful principal candidates, principals practicing in a variety of educational settings within the school system, and persons aspiring to the position of principal in the identified school district. Data included the transcribed interviews, some referential materials, supplemented notes and journal references. The analysis of the data involved the use of charts which facilitated the comparison of data both within and across the various groups of participants. Triangulation and peer debriefings were to used to enhance the trustworthiness of the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMANDS OF A PRINCIPALSHIP

In this chapter, results of analyzing data related to the nature of the principalship are presented under three major themes: the functions of the principal, personal qualities and skills related to the performance of the tasks of a principal, and leadership experiences relevant to gaining practice and acquiring skills associated with the principalship. Within each theme, a number of specific categories provide a more complete description of the principalship as viewed by the participants.

Functions of the Principal

The responsibilities of principals in this school system are outlined in the "Terms of Reference" in the school board's Policy Manual as well as in the "Evaluation of Principals" policy. Six categories, which focussed on the major functions of the principal, reflect the content of these two sources: administration, curriculum, supervision, public relations and communications, Catholic educational leadership and staff development. These categories are used as the basis for developing a general perspective on various aspects of the functions of a principal.

Administration

The area of administration encompasses functions related to the coordination and operation of the school. Of the six areas concerned with the actual demands of the job, the fewest specific comments by participants related to administration. From data about responding to directives, distinct tasks, and assistance from staff, three sub-categories were developed.

Response to directives. Responding to directives from personnel and agencies outside the school building accounted for the majority of comments in the administration category. Five of the six practicing principals referred to the administrative functions of principal as being shaped to a large extent by the central office of the school system. Tasks in this category were described as being a "response to things that are given to you from the Board office," or "processing things for departments at the Board office." References to "a lot of paper" and "a lot of forms" were frequently made by the principals. The implementation of the policies set out by the school system defined many of the administrative duties of principals.

In addition to the demands from the central administrative structure of the school system, participants cited the Ministry of Education as an additional source to which principals had obligations. Responses in this sub-category included the need to "monitor the attendance," complete a "statistical report" and "make sure books are on the circular" (Circular 14 is the Ministry of Education approved list of textbooks). The Education Act and other Ministry regulations were also indicated as having an impact on the administrative duties of the principal.

One of the principals interviewed summed up the source of the administrative function as "predominantly legislation" where the principal was required to "carry out Ministry policies, Board policies, the Education Act." This principal also mentioned legislation such as the Young Offenders Act and the Family and Children Services Act as additional sources of administrative responsibilities.

The interaction of the school with various social agencies and legal authorities was also mentioned by some principals. One participant discussed the presence of crisis housing in the school neighbourhood and custody issues as areas of concern. Another principal talked at length about the "social work function" which schools were assuming with various situations including child and sexual abuse. This respondent stated that "more and more the police are using the school as a forum to contact students" and that "more agencies are trying to use" the school. Responding to directives from sources both internal and external to the school, was considered by the majority of participants one of the main administrative functions of the principal.

Specific school operations. A number of specific administrative duties -- scheduling, timetabling, budgeting -- were mentioned by all of the respondents. Four principals commented on scheduling and timetabling for both staff and students. Three of the respondents were in large schools dealing with students on a rotary schedule, where the pupils change classes every forty or seventy-six minutes to attend lessons taught by subject specialists. In these schools, both Board policy and negotiated agreements had a bearing on timetable decisions.

One participant referred to being "swamped with scheduling and staffing" while another one indicated that timetabling "is always a big administrative responsibility in a school like this." A third respondent discussed the "tremendous demands re the organizational aspects of the school" and the need to restructure "the timetable to cut down on the movement and the teacher preparations." One principal in a school not using a rotary operation stated there were "timetable adjustments necessary for resource people, finding them a place to work, finding release personnel for the teachers to meet with them."

The school budget was mentioned by all six participants. For one principal, administrative duties in this area involved "taking the budget allocation that's given by the Board and determining how that's going to work for the school itself and how I'm going to administer that." A second response related to the budget focussed on "setting it and administering it." Other participants mentioned budget as one of their specific tasks but did not elaborate further.

Particular areas such as special education generated numerous administrative tasks. The preparation for and attendance at Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings was mentioned by all six principals. One respondent remarked that "we have IPRC's all the time. And of course there's all the paperwork that goes with it." In one school which housed special education classes the principal identified special education as a "particular administrative need" while another principal with special education classes in the school, referred to scheduling mutually agreeable meetings with "five different groups of people you've got try to get together" as being "time-consuming."

Transportation, a fourth task associated with the operation of the school, was commented on by five respondents. As with tasks related to the school budget, transportation or bussing was usually only mentioned as an administrative duty with no additional detail provided. For one principal, bussing was handled by the school secretary who had to be "an air traffic controller to manage the transportation and keep track of all these kids." The only other principal who commented on transportation did so in conjunction with supervision responsibilities in terms of being "responsible for bussing and the issues that are occurring on bussing. You deal with student supervision in terms of interracial, ethnic issues and beatings."

Some preparation in regard to developing a timetable, particularly in a larger school, was also a concern of three participants from this group. One of the aspiring principals currently holding the position of vice-principal stated that "timetabling would be one thing which I don't feel confident in" while a second vice-principal stated that "no one ever showed me how to make a timetable."

Delegation of tasks. The third sub-category related to administrative aspects of the principal's role centered on the involvement of other school personnel in carrying out various tasks. Three specific groups of personnel which were assigned administrative duties by the principal were identified: the school secretary, the vice-principal and other staff. One principal, in expressing the need to delegate, said "I realize that there's no way one person can do it, so I delegate."

The delegation of a variety of tasks to the school secretary was mentioned by each of the principals interviewed. In the words of two principals, school secretaries were given the responsibility of "a lot of administrivia." One principal indicated that the secretary did "all the paperwork," leaving the task of signing to him. As was mentioned in relation to transportation, two principals delegated to the school secretary the management of that aspect of the school operation. The school vice-principal was another person to whom principals tended to delegate administrative duties. One principal spoke of things being "done as a leadership team." For this individual, responsibilities such as IPRC's were "shared with the vice-principal." Another participant referred to the vice-principal as "part of the administrative team" to whom administrative duties were given.

The use of the Learning Centre Resource Teacher in matters dealing with special education was identified by several participants. In discussing the processing of special education paperwork, one principal stated "I try to do it through the Learning Centre teachers and if I didn't have good Learning Centre teachers who kept track of it, I'd go crazy." For another interviewee the special education paperwork included "notices to parents, testing" and "all kind of stuff" which was delegated to the "special ed teachers."

Four principals commented on the relation of delegating responsibility and staff development. All respondents who referred to delegation considered it important to the accomplishment of a variety of duties as well as for enabling the principal to affirm and support the strengths of their staff members. For one principal, through the delegation of duties to the staff, one could "recognize the skills that the staff has and use them [the skills]." A second principal who delegated decision making authority to staff members, but always maintained the responsibility for the decisions, relied on "faith and trust" in the staff to carry out the delegated tasks; a third participant viewed delegation of duties to persons aspiring to the principalship as an opportunity to gain actual experience in certain areas, in addition to assisting the principal.

Additional administrative functions were discussed by individual principals. Three principals mentioned the idea of planning. One principal stated "the first thing I do with administration is usually some advanced planning." The principal of a large school referred to administration as being "so many other tasks" which necessitated "a lot of time and planning." Preplanning allowed a third principal to "manage anything, any crisis that occurs." Incidental references were made to meetings being conducted for a variety of reasons. All principals commented on meetings in conjunction with special education while one principal of a larger school spoke about the need for "a lot of meetings" for various aspects of the administration of the school.

The majority of administrative duties for principals appeared to be related to responding to directives generated by central office administrators, through Board policies, from the Ministry of Education and from outside social agencies. Although the specific tasks were relatively few, within the area of special education considerable time and attention by principals on related processes, forms and meetings contributed to the administrative responsibilities. Scheduling and timetabling were concerns of principals in larger schools while transportation and budget duties were mentioned by all principals. The delegation of administrative duties to secretaries and vice-principals helped the principals to carry out their duties in the area of administration. All respondents acknowledged delegating some of their tasks to one or more persons within the school setting.

Curriculum

As described by one principal, curriculum was "a hazy area" because curriculum was interrelated with the categories of supervision, both program and staff, and staff development. From the participants' responses, specific responsibilities were difficult to determine. The integration of curriculum tasks with staff evaluation and professional development activities was referred to by several participants. In order to separate these three related functions of principals, the category of curriculum was defined as the area concerned with the development and implementation of the educational program.

Curriculum duties for the principal were viewed as "predetermined by the Board which in turn has been governed by the Ministry." The "centralized curriculum department" developed "guidelines" and "documents" which schools were to implement. For one principal, the generation of curriculum from the school district's curriculum department and the Ministry of Education meant that "a lot of the principal's work in curriculum is already done."

Three of the principals made reference to the number of curriculum documents being developed by the centralized curriculum department and the ability of the school staff to adequately process them. Decisions regarding which guidelines were a priority rested with the principal. One principal termed curriculum implementation "a real juggling act in the schools" while another stated that there were "enough [documents] to last us for at least five years." When discussing curriculum directives being given to the schools, one participant felt that "the teachers are bombarded" and the principal was the one "to sort it out and figure out what the school can handle, what's mandated."

For five of the six principals interviewed, implementation was considered the main task in the area of curriculum. One principal stated "it's definitely implementation that I focus on," while another had not "found any demands on curriculum except for implementation of the curriculum that is already created." Principals viewed their role in curriculum as one of "motivator" or "facilitator" with the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the Board and Ministry of Education policies.

When discussing responsibilities related to the implementation of curriculum, five principals focussed on the task of becoming familiar with the policies. One principal said "You have to prepare for these things. You have to familiarize yourself with the documents." For another principal the need to "have an overview of everything" was important. A third principal viewed the knowledge of curriculum documents as "a vision of what's coming down from the Ministry, what's coming down from the Board." The need for the principal "to get to know the guidelines in existence" was one aspect on which most principals were in agreement.

In addition to becoming familiar with curriculum initiatives, attending to staff curriculum needs was also mentioned as being the responsibility of the principal. One principal said the task was to "make sure teachers are aware of them, have them and are using them." Another principal discussed using "curriculum personnel" while yet another referred to "[calling] on the experts" for assistance with the implementation process.

For one of the participants another task related to curriculum implementation involved "examining long range plans of the teachers and checking for reference to these [curriculum] documents." A second principal specifically requested, "that the long range plans are written by the teacher which are directly related to those Board guidelines."

In addition to monitoring the long range plans of the teachers, five principals visited classrooms to ensure that appropriate implementation was occurring. One principal stated "it's a question of actually going in to see . . . you actually have to go in and see what happens," while another respondent stated "you know from going to classes and seeing [for] yourself." Classroom visitations and the examination of long range plans were also discussed in relation to supervision of staff and program.

Individual interviews with teachers concerning curriculum implementation was a further responsibility identified by three principals. The interview was a means "to ensure that they [the plans of the teacher] are emanating from the Board guidelines and covering every aspect as much as possible."

The development of curriculum was not an aspect in which the principals seemed to be involved to any great extent, although two principals expressed a desire to do more in this area. One respondent intended "to identify a certain area that a whole division wants to concentrate on and work on it for a year." Another principal was interested in "curriculum ideas and themes and units that can be developed as a staff or as a division that are going to be really relevant to these kids."

In general, the principal's tasks in the area of curriculum seem to be associated primarily with implementation. Their role was viewed as one of a facilitator providing material and human resources to teachers. Through staff evaluation and staff development strategies, principals monitored curriculum implementation to ensure the use of approved documents.

Supervision

When discussing supervisory duties, principals focussed on three distinct areas of responsibility: supervision of staff, program supervision and student concerns.

Program supervision. The supervision of the educational program in the school was closely tied to curriculum. Various duties related to ensuring that the teachers were implementing the curriculum documents were identified by the participants.

The obligation for principals to ensure that teachers have "long range plans" or "course outlines" was mentioned by five principals.

One principal was able "to keep aware of where people are in their long range plans and in their programs" by personal interaction with the teachers. Another respondent conducted interviews with the teachers "about their long range plans." A participant in one of the larger schools relied on course outlines to "spot some weaknesses" in the school instructional program.

Monitoring the program involved classroom visits for all of the principals. One principal stated "I go in the classrooms and say, 'So what are you doing today?'" Another respondent felt that "going to classes and seeing [for] yourself" was a method of confirming that the proper educational program was being offered. Prior to going into classrooms and carrying out supervisory duties one principal developed "a good working relationship" so that teachers have a sense of "trust" and "comfort." Another principal felt that you had "to make sure [teachers] have the support" when program implementation is being evaluated.

Student supervision. Performing responsibilities in relation to student progress led to involvement in teacher/principal conferences for four principals. These discussions allowed principals "to talk about kids and where they've been and what they've done." Another principal would "talk to the classroom teacher or to other teachers who've had the kids before" to follow the progress of students. Particular attention was paid by one participant to "kids who are identified or flagged as ones who require any extra help." In relation to these students there was "a lot of interaction with the Learning Centre teacher." One principal looked "at the finished product, notebooks, creative writing, bulletin board displays" when monitoring student progress. Two participants made use of the "report cards" as tools which offered information about the progress of the students. One respondent administered standardized tests to determine student progress.

Two principals were concerned with the legal responsibilities related to student supervision. One respondent had prepared "a little package which explains the legal responsibilities of supervision" for teachers. Another expressed concern that "student supervision [was] increasingly [becoming] more demanding. It's to the point, liability is an issue." For one participant the institution of "consistent procedures" were deemed to be important as was the necessity for the principal "to be visible" and "to double check." In relation to classroom control, one principal indicated "you look more closely in areas where there seems to be chaos."

Another facet of student supervision, which centered on discipline and behaviour, was mentioned by two participants. In one instance the principal delegated to the vice-principal all responsibility for student discipline unless the issue was deemed to be serious. In these instances, the principal would become involved as "the last resort, the court of appeal." Another participant who did not "do much student supervision myself" asked the staff "to be responsible for their own discipline" as a means to reinforce the individual teacher's classroom management.

Staff evaluation. All six principals identified teacher evaluation as an aspect of staff supervision. The process was governed by a Board policy and included teachers on probationary and permanent contracts as well as the support staff in the school. All principals but one were solely responsible for the evaluation of all staff. Although one principal described the evaluation policy as "an affirming tool," three participants regarded the process as a task that "takes a fair amount of time" and an area where "a major part of the time is spent "

In addition to the evaluation of teachers, principals were responsible for evaluating the support staff of the school. For most principals this included the custodian, custodial helper and secretary. In the larger schools, where more than one custodian or secretary could be assigned, the principal was responsible for their evaluation as well. Another principal reported the teacher assistants assigned to the school, as support staff who were also included in the Board evaluation policy.

Within the function of supervision, principals were responsible for the areas of staff, student and program supervision. The obligation to implement a Board policy on staff evaluation was deemed to account for much of the principal's time. Monitoring long range plans and classroom visits were among the supervisory duties of the principal. The legal responsibilities of the educational system regarding student behaviour were a further concern raised by participants.

Public Relations and Communications

Comments related to the public relations and communications function of the job presented the most information of all six categories. Remarks focussed on why public relations were necessary, who were the targeted groups with which the schools came into contact, and how public relations and communications were accomplished. The major aspects of activities in this area involve: tasks associated with public relations, audiences and activities for maintaining public relations.

Tasks associated with public relations. For several participants, the primary task related to ensuring that a good public relations and communications program was in place, involved "[keeping] everyone informed." This informative aspect of public relations and communications was frequently described as "critical," "on-going," and "positive." For one interviewee, previewing of all written contacts to ensure their "quality" was an aspect of this role for the principal.

Fostering good relations with the community, especially "the adjacent one" was determined to be important for two respondents. One principal, who referred to being "a little bit too concerned about" the image of the school, considered the maintenance of the external appearance of the building and grounds and the behaviour of the students an "important aspect of public relations."

For individual principals, retaining students within the school system and promoting an educational continuum from Junior Kindergarten to OAC were further aspects of maintaining a public relations and communication program. "The idea of continuity," with students beginning their educational program in a particular elementary school, continuing in a senior elementary school and choosing a high school in the same system, was particularly important to one participant. Promotion of the whole educational system was identified by two principals. One respondent felt that

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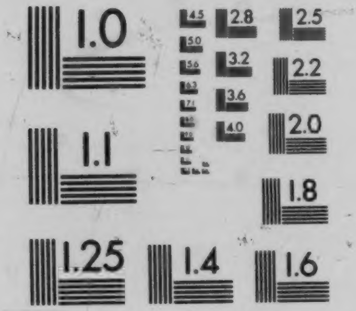
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the principal should "be an enthusiastic spokesperson for the Board" while a second participant spoke about the obligation "to sell our system [the Separate school system] as a system."

Audiences. Public relations and communications programs were designed for groups of people both within the school and outside of the building. For principals, both an awareness of and interaction with the various audiences were tasks associated with the communications and public relation aspect of their role. Four distinct audiences were identified by some of the participants.

The most frequently mentioned audience was the parents. All six principals referred to specific aspects of maintaining good relations with parents. One principal spoke about "specific topics I may want to get out to the parents" while another acknowledged the responsibility "to respond to parents." A third principal viewed "contact with parents" as a "professional expectation" of both administrators and teachers. For a fourth participant, the interaction with parents included "assisting" them and "offering services" where possible.

The second most frequently mentioned audience was the community, both the neighbouring school community and the community at large. Five principals discussed the importance of activities designed to "try to keep good relations with the community" and "to get your community involved." Two principals specifically mentioned the school neighbourhood. One was concerned with the need to "respect the property of the people near the school" and the second felt that the maintenance of positive relations was especially important because the school "was living in this neighbourhood on image alone." "The taxpayers who don't have children in the school" were identified as another significant audience by one principal.

The parish was also identified as a community audience. For one respondent the close relationship of the community and the Church was built on the belief that "a lot of the public relations that are done, are done through the Church." Two other principals mentioned the parish priest as the recipient of various school communications, while a third participant involved the priest as an communication agent "to speak about Catholic education" in the parish.

A third audience to which four participants referred included the staff and the students. Various activities intended to "enhance the school spirit" were offered to the students. Two principals viewed the staff and students as "public relations vehicles" who were responsible for "the positive school image" through their interactions with the parents and the school neighbourhood. The enrolment of three of the schools was dependent on students from other "feeder schools." One principal spoke of the necessity to be "constantly marketing" and having "to sell" the school to students in the feeder schools. Two principals outlined program components designed to "bring the students" to the school as a measure to ensure that student retention was maintained.

Two principals identified the central office personnel of the school system as a fourth audience. Including these people on the "newsletter" mailing list was one means to support relations between the school and the central office. A second principal viewed "communication with the Board" as important for the awareness of "any concerns they've got" as well as for "promoting the school and developing the school."

Activities for maintaining public relations. Communication and public relations activities, tools and vehicles were designed to be informative as well as to elicit feedback. The majority of identified communication methods were directed to the parents of the school while several events were intended for students. Some aspects of the communication program focussed on other identified audiences. Two-way communication with all target groups was also incorporated into the public relations plans of the participants. Two-way communication with parents was achieved through "information evenings," "open houses," "parent-teacher interviews," and "personal phone calls." The responsibility for this latter interaction rested with both the principals and the staff members.

Principals ensured that communications were facilitated through a variety of activities. One of the main methods, which all schools reported, was a newsletter. One principal sent the school newsletter to "parents, the Director of Education, the superintendents, other schools, and the parish priest." Two principals included the parents and students in the feeder schools as recipients of the school newsletter. The frequency of sending out newsletters varied with the participants. While one principal specified that the school had a "newsletter which comes out bi-monthly," another participant "put them out about six times a year," and a third principal sent out a newsletter "a couple of times a year."

Two principals identified their personal contact with parents by telephone as important to maintaining public relations. One principal stated "I try to respond to parent calls as fast as I can." Although one interviewee found that "sometimes it's difficult to make contact," this individual felt that it was important to "keep trying."

In addition to their own calls to parents, two principals requested that the staff telephone parents. In both instances, the students were on a rotary schedule and came into contact with several teachers during the day. One principal entitled the strategy "a positive phone call home that goes a long way." These calls were viewed as "very good P.R." because "the parent thinks that teacher or that principal thinks about or cares about my kid." The second principal held high expectations that "the teacher must maintain the contact."

"Parent-teacher interviews" and "report cards" were identified as specific communication activities by three principals. Since an impression of the school could be affected by written communication sent out, one principal read, "report cards . . . carefully" to ensure the image of the school remained a positive one. A second participant referred to "the whole process of progress reporting" as critical to public relations. Making certain that teachers "have the substance to write progress reports" or "data for evaluations" was an important task for this individual.

Two principals had organized parent groups associated with the school, and another principal mentioned that the school "had a lot of parent volunteers." For one participant, only one interaction since the beginning of the year had occurred with a parent group. The parent association at the second school was more formally organized, and the principal not only attended their meetings but also provided use of the school or other services to assist them "with getting information home."

Public relations was also accomplished by "invitations to the school for a variety of things." Specifically identified by several principals were Masses, celebrations, concerts, plays, and an awards night. Although the parents were the main targeted audience for these events, clergy and others were included in the invitations. At the high school "the graduation is a big P.R. event" where the principal attempted "to get trustees plus your community involved too."

Public relations activities aimed at students were mentioned by three principals. Each of the schools depended on others within the school district for enrolment. To encourage students to continue their education in the same system, principals often had the students visit the higher level school for an "orientation day," "a Christmas assembly," or "to see our school [dramatic] production." One school maintained "a monthly bulletin board" in the feeder schools with the responsibility for the display delegated to students who had graduated from that particular school.

One principal emphasized maintaining school spirit "all the time." Specific activities included "assemblies, or things like dropins, like winter carnivals, Grade 8 excursion," and "intramural activities." For this participant, these events had "enhanced the school spirit." The principal considered the students "our biggest P.R. vehicle" and stated the reason for "a pretty positive school image [is] because of our kids."

Definite attempts at public relations within the school neighbourhood were mentioned by two principals. One participant briefly stated "you ensure that the kids respect property of the people near the school." The second principal engaged in strategies to maintain the external appearance of the school. "I actually have the janitors clean the outside of the school, or some of the students [do it]." This respondent also made sure that "kids don't mess up other people's yards" so the school image in the neighbourhood remained positive.

Public relations and communication functions of the principal included written, verbal and personal interaction with a variety of people associated with the school. Several different activities fostered a communication program aimed at positive interaction and the development and maintenance of good relations with parents, students, the community and central office personnel. Some initiatives were designed as both informative and a two-way mechanism for feedback.

Catholic Educational Leadership

The category of Catholic educational leadership is different from the others related to the functions of the principal. Information from the senior administrators and the practicing principals focussed on the principal's responsibilities in developing a specific school climate to reflect the ideals of the Catholic faith.

This particular function of the principal was identified as an additional aspect of principal's role during interviews with seniors administrators. While commenting on expectations for the principals employed in this school system, the senior administrators made several references which distinguished principals of Catholic schools from "just a principal." Principals were viewed by the senior administrators as persons with a "special mandate" to fulfill. According to one of the senior administrators, persons seeking the principalship in this school system were expected to demonstrate a "commitment to the objectives of Catholic education." Another member from this group stated, that in their capacity of choosing principals, they had "a particular vested interest in finding" the person "who's living a Christian experience and is Christian in his or her dealing with people." These repeated references to a Catholic dimension were significant findings which led to the inclusion of questions emphasizing the functions of the principal in a Catholic school as opposed to the tasks of principals in general.

One of the practicing principals described the Catholic educational leadership function as a "nebulous requirement," while for a second principal, this task category was "one of the biggest challenges and one of the hardest functions to get a handle on." In defining their role as Catholic leaders, the principals made several references related to ensuring that the "atmosphere" and "tone" of the school was conducive to fostering "a Catholic identity." Examples of "visual images" which assisted in creating an appropriate school environment were also presented throughout the discussions.

The remarks of four principals were associated with establishing an appropriate atmosphere within the school. Regarding the functions of the Catholic educational leader, two principals commented on responsibilities related to "building" or "developing Christian community." A second participant discussed the obligation for the principal to foster "a Catholic identity" and "the whole idea of promoting a Catholic atmosphere" while a third principal stated that "you have to build the climate."

The proper climate was described as one which promoted a "democratization of education" by allowing the staff and students to be "involved in decision-making." The concept of a "team approach" was important to one principal for building community in the school. A "positive tone" was critical for two principals. To maintain this, one respondent "monitored the announcements" and "would not let anything negative be put on" including "calling students out to discipline [them]." A second principal found it helpful to "positively announce visits" of clergy and other personnel so they "feel welcome." "Being supportive" of staff and students was also identified as contributing to the establishment of an atmosphere of "Christian community."

Certain activities were proposed by all of the principals interviewed so that the Catholic philosophy was "translated into the schools." The most frequently mentioned examples, for all the participants, included Masses and liturgical celebrations and the regularity of these events. "Having them on a regular basis, not just leaving them to chance" was, for one individual, the way this particular system had created the Christian community within their schools.

The use of the clergy was another way for principals to foster a Catholic environment within the school. Five of the six principals referred to the presence of the priest and/or a chaplain in the school. Not all incidences were related to the celebration of Masses but included the importance of making the clergy "part of the staff" by inviting "them to socials and school activities and events." One principal stated, "You work very carefully with your chaplain or priest." This individual felt that the priest could "really share the responsibility of helping the school become more Catholic, Christian" through staff development activities. Two principals mentioned that they encouraged staff and students to avail themselves of the clergy for personal faith development.

A third activity, mentioned by four principals, involved the planning "a faith development day" for the staff. These individuals incorporated into the annual allotment of professional activity days, one day especially focussed on matters concerned with the faith dimension of the school. For one principal the focus was on coping with death because several staff members had encountered this within the last couple of years. Although not all the principals presented specific topics with which their faith development days dealt, all were in agreement on the importance of this activity to building the appropriate within the school.

In one school the principal was very concerned with "trying to foster a Catholic identity." In addition to "a staff faith development day," the practice was to have "retreats" for the students. This same individual was also considering the implementation of staff retreats in the near future.

Three principals focussed on their personal visibility in various activities. "Preparing celebrations and being involved in celebrations and Masses" was viewed as being "visible to the kids and parents of your school." This dimension of being "seen in the community as practising your faith" or "giving witness" contributed to the development of the appropriate environment to which Catholic schools strived and for which the principals were responsible.

Sacramental preparation was another aspect of involvement for the principals. Although the students of one school attended different parishes, the principal attempted to "go around to every parish where our students are getting confirmed and be there." This presented the principal with an opportunity to be visible as well as to affirm the students and "show them that it [reception of the sacrament] is very important." Another individual considered the principal's presence in sacramental preparation "whether the school is in your [own] parish or not" an important aspect of Catholic leadership.

Individual initiatives intended to provide a visible aspect to the Catholic nature of the schools were also described by the principals. These included: the presence of symbols such as crucifixes, the existence of a chapel, and the celebration of Masses in the parish Church where feasible. For one principal the translation of the "social mission" of the school into "actual concrete strategies in the community" was a further visible aspect of the distinct Catholic identity of the school. The students in this particular school performed "actual concrete Christian acts" such as providing food to a local emergency shelter and entertaining senior citizens and hospitalized persons throughout the community.

In their capacity as a Catholic educational leader, the principals instituted and were involved in several activities designed to develop a community of faith within the schools. The promotion of the Catholic nature of the school, through visible initiatives, was a function of which all the principals interviewed were aware and a responsibility which they all seriously undertook to fulfill.

Staff Development

The responsibilities of the principals within the category of staff development were closely related to the duties associated with the categories of curriculum, supervision and Catholic educational leadership. To distinguish this aspect of the role, staff development is defined to include those tasks which facilitate and encourage the personal and professional growth of staff. In general these tasks relate to both program needs and personal support.

Program needs. All six principals indicated that much of the staff development function was related to assisting staff members with the implementation of "different curriculum documents." In some instances the principal structured activities for the whole staff to "go through the process" of implementing a specific document or policy, while in other cases activities were planned so that some "divisions in the school" could "try and adapt and integrate some of that curriculum." The principals ensured that the appropriate material, human and financial resources were available and used by the staff.

Four principals were concerned that staff members could be "at such different levels" or "different stages" of the implementation process. In these instances, the principal was responsible for accommodating the individual needs of the teachers. One principal mentioned that it was important to "try to make things open [less structured] with some flexibility for option, for choice" to address the particular levels of development of the staff. A second principal remarked that some staff members may remain at a particular phase of the implementation process, but that "you can't hold people back because everyone isn't at the same point." This individual felt that "it's the principal's job to see that this doesn't happen." Few concrete activities, related to motivating teachers to progress in the area program development were presented by the principals.

Evaluation of individual teachers was another activity through which principals could determine what was required in the area of staff development. One principal mentioned using program and teacher evaluation to find out if a "particular teacher isn't using a particular program." In such instances, through discussions with the teacher, the principal would discover if "there [is] anything you need in your professional development" in terms of "supports" to "put this program in place" and to provide the required resources.

Personal staff needs. All of the six principals interviewed indicated that their role was to "encourage," "support" or "affirm" staff members in personal professional development activities. The availability of a variety of sources -- both within and outside of the school system -- assisted principals with these tasks. Within the school system, two sources were mentioned: Board sponsored professional activity days and the teacher federation's professional development day. Although for both of these sources attendance was mandatory, most principals felt that the variety of workshops available offered opportunities for individual choice and growth.

Five principals encouraged teachers "to take advantage of whatever P.D. [professional development] opportunities there are." "P.D. funds" from the school budget assisted teachers to attend "local workshops" or "conferences." Principal support also was given in the form of personal advice. For four principals this was especially important with respect to those teachers who were "upwardly mobile" or seemed "not only suited for but interested in going on to other leadership kinds of positions." One principal made "sure that they've got the information they need" and also spoke to individual teachers about their career plans. A second principal encouraged "people to do professional reading" and at times provided pertinent articles to staff members.

The area of staff development was one of the least clearly defined functions by the principals interviewed. References to curriculum and evaluation in order to determine school and individual needs, as well as the obligation to encourage staff members to engage in personal, professional development, were mentioned as tasks associated with the function of staff development. Some principals commented on responsibilities related to encouraging staff to engage in professional reading; promoting attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars outside of the local school system; having individual discussions with staff members; and identifying and supporting those seeking positions of added responsibility. Providing choice or "flexibility" for staff members in professional development was considered important by all the principals.

Summary

Six major areas appear to define the general tasks of the principalship. Many of the principal's administrative responsibilities were predetermined by legislation including Board policies and Ministry of Education Acts, Regulations, and directives. For all principals, implementation tasks were a more frequently mentioned responsibility than was the development phase of the curriculum process. Supervisory duties focussed on staff, students and the instructional program. In the area of public relations and communications, activities aimed at ensuring harmonious relations between the school, the home, the community and the school board's central office personnel were addressed. For this particular school system, the Catholic dimension was significant to the role of the principal. The creation of a positive school climate was an important aspect of this category. Within the area of staff development, principals' responsibilities were derived from curriculum needs and through staff evaluations. Most of the principals also encouraged individual professional growth for staff members.

Personal Qualities and Skills

The personal qualities and skills which the three groups of participants considered important to the performance of the job of a principal involved three broad categories: interpersonal, personal and organizational.

Interpersonal

Interpersonal relationships involve primarily face-to-face interaction. Most of the responses related to human relations and projection of leadership.

Human relations. The area of human relations includes the rapport between the principal and the staff, the personality of the principal, and actions of the principal which facilitate positive relationships. This was the only area, within the theme of personal qualities and skills, in which references were made by all participants of the three interviewed groups. One principal and five aspiring principals specifically identified "people skills" as important qualities of a principal. The principal mentioned that "all of it is people skills. . . not just people on your staff but it's also students, parents." The aspiring principals expressed the concept as knowing "how to deal with people," "working with people," being in a "people business," and being a "people person."

The importance of establishing positive rapport between the principal, staff and students was mentioned by several principals and aspiring principals. The obligation to "foster a good rapport with the staff" and "to get along well with people" was a task which one principal considered critical. As well as the need for the principal to get along with staff, another principal felt that the presence of "a staff that gets along well" assisted with the effective operation of the school. One principal described the role as one of "a social coordinator" who had to ensure that everyone was "working together as a school team."

Three principals mentioned that it was important for the staff to feel "comfortable with the principal" or "relaxed in what they're doing." One aspiring principal felt that a principal with "a compatible personality" would achieve the desired rapport. The comments of four aspiring principals indicated that the "trust of the staff" was essential to developing a positive rapport while for two principals, it was an "approachable" individual.

The establishment of an appropriate relationship was facilitated by "affirming" and "encouraging" staff. These two ideas as well as the notion of "supporting the staff" were expressed by four principals, one senior administrator and five aspiring principals. Some participants felt that principals could foster a positive rapport through "motivational skills" which demonstrated to staff members that the principal "respect[ed] their rights and their abilities" and conveyed to people that they were thought of as "valuable." In contrast to the staff affirmation and support, three principals, two senior administrators and one aspiring principal mentioned that principals should be "direct," "stern," and "firm" depending on the situation.

Thirteen participants indicated that communication skills were important in performing the tasks associated with a principalship. Respondents mentioned that a principal should be a good listener who was capable of speaking and writing "well," "clearly" and "concisely," as well as able to "speak in public." The ability to speak in public was described by principals as: "feel comfortable with public speaking" and "able to speak freely, not read it from a text." Aspiring principals were also conscious of public speaking duties. Their comments included: "be comfortable speaking with people" and "being in front of people more on a regular basis and feeling comfortable." Senior administrators did not refer to this skill.

Skills related to the conflict resolution were identified by five participants. The skill of diplomacy was mentioned by two principals and one senior administrator. The principals commented on the importance of "diplomatically [handling] situations" while the senior administrator perceived that principals should be able to "deal with people diplomatically." For one participant, the use of diplomacy was critical "so as not to undermine the individual but to right a situation." In addition to references to "being a diplomat" four participants commented on the principal's ability to "subtly draw the line" or to clearly communicate tolerable limits. One principal often used the terms "bottom line," "non-negotiable" and "negotiable" in discussing expectations with various staff members. The ability to "be very firm" or "stern" in certain situations was emphasized by a senior administrator and an aspiring principal.

Projection of leadership. Seven of the fifteen participants considered it important that the principal "be seen as a leader" by the staff, the students and the community. Two senior administrators identified leadership as a desirable characteristic that principals should have or strive to achieve. One of the senior administrators used the term "modelability" to describe "someone in the principalship that other people will attempt to model."

For the principals and the aspiring principals, the perception conveyed in interactions with staff, students and parents assisted the principal to accomplish tasks. One principal, in discussing student relationships, illustrated the importance of the image and the attitude projected with the following statement: "If you don't look like you're going to have a problem, if you don't think you're going have a problem, you don't." An aspiring principal felt that "people won't do any work" for a principal they "[perceived] as being lazy." The notion of "being accepted by all constituents" was, for another principal, critical to task performance.

Four respondents referred to the relationship of the principal and the staff. Two senior administrators stressed that the principals should "distinguish their role in the school." One senior administrator mentioned that principals are "not just a staff member, they're in fact the principal of the school," while a second senior administrator perceived that principals were to "stand above the herd" especially in certain decision-making situations which would not please the staff.

For one principal and one senior administrator, the tendency for some principals to "be friends with people" interfered with their leadership role. Rather than a relationship based on friendship, one principal emphasized the importance of being "a colleague with your professionals," but felt that "it's very difficult to say you're a real genuine friend with somebody you're working with because you're going to have to, at some point in time, make a decision that could hurt them or bother you for making it." One aspiring principal referred to the relationship of the principal and staff as different from "being pals with everybody." This individual felt that the principal should have "a different perspective" which entailed ensuring "that whatever you said is exactly what you mean because you are perceived as the leader."

A similar view was expressed by a senior administrator in terms of the expectations of different groups such as the staff and the community. This individual felt that the principal "trying to satisfy them [the community] and trying to satisfy the staff with whom you work on a day-to day basis" was going to experience difficulty "because sometimes there's quite a bit of difference between what the staff perceives and what the public perceives."

Participants identified many interpersonal qualities and skills which principals should possess. Human relations skills which assisted the principal in establishing a positive rapport were frequently mentioned. Participants commented on skills relevant to the communication and conflict resolution aspects of the principal's role. The ability for the principal to be perceived as a leader by various people was important for many respondents.

Personal

Personal qualities were relevant to any setting, not only the educational organization; participants referred to those attributes which individuals bring of themselves to a situation. Those include personal characteristics, philosophy and values, and academic background and knowledge.

Personal characteristics. Twelve participants commented on several individual characteristics which could assist principals in carrying out their duties. The characteristic of honesty or "integrity" was mentioned by two practicing principals, one aspiring principal and one senior administrator. As well, for a practicing principal, an aspiring principal and two senior administrators, an individual who was "keen" or displayed enthusiasm was perceived as possessing a quality desirable in prospective principals.

A "sense of humour" was regarded as essential by one senior administrator because "we live in a world that's full of stress, that's full of ambiguity and there is no certitude, there's no longer any correct way." For this individual, a sense of humour enabled one to "laugh at your decisions, at your folly, in particular, and at the absurdity of making decisions in a sea of uncertainty," and contributed to a leadership defined as authentic. The possession of a sense of humour was identified by a practicing principal who viewed it important "to be able to laugh at yourself and at the situation."

Being understanding and compassionate was mentioned as a desirable characteristic by both a practicing and an aspiring principal. The practicing principal considered "showing compassion and consideration for other people" an important characteristic for principals in a Catholic school system. For the aspiring principal this same quality was evident in the view that a principal should be "compassionate or just the person who cares about other people, it's kind of understanding."

Several participants presented personal preferences regarding desirable characteristics of a principal, without elaboration. Qualities mentioned by individual respondents included: sincere, genuine, warm, friendly, calm, easy-going and patient.

For twelve participants, self-assurance was considered an important characteristic for aspiring principals; ten interviewees specifically identified confidence as a critical quality. One senior administrator commented that confidence developed in "people who've seen themselves in this role [a leadership role] all their lives." Other participants, including both practicing and aspiring principals, referred to various experiences which would facilitate gaining "a certain amount of confidence."

For two principals and one senior administrator, self assurance involved the ability to "be yourself" and to have "a strong of self." The senior administrator considered being able "to look at yourself realistically" a desirable quality for persons seeking the principalship. Two principals and a senior administrator mentioned that an individual "can't be a phony" in the position of principal because, as stated by one principal, "If you try to be something else, nobody will have any respect for you."

Three participants included references to the personal well-being of principals and the necessity for principals to maintain a balance in personal life, role expectations and community commitments. One aspiring principal, one principal, and one senior administrator indicated the need for a "sense of balance in their [principal's] life." The balancing of duties related to the job, the community and the family was identified as being important for the principal in striving to maintain physical and mental health. Both the senior administrator and the aspiring principal mentioned that principals should "be selective because you can get burnt out by picking too much." The principal respondent discussed at length the need for "a high energy level" and "built-in stress inhibitors" to assist with "[balancing] your stress." The "ability to manage your own personal life" was regarded by this principal as an important skill for a school administrator.

Philosophy and values. All three senior administrators and all six principals commented on the philosophy and values related to the Catholic nature of the school system. Only one of the six aspiring principals mentioned "that people should be committed to the Catholic philosophy."

Although most participants did not expand on the topic, one senior administrator discussed philosophy in conjunction with "mission" both "in terms of their [the principals] mission as an educator" and "their [the principals] mission, more specifically, as a leader within a Catholic school system." For this individual, an understanding of "the purpose of a Catholic school" was critical to the ability to "fulfil the mandate, the special mandate as a Catholic school principal." A second senior administrator viewed holding "a central set of beliefs" as essential for successful school leaders. One principal indicated that "you need a philosophy that fits in with the theme of reconciliation, our Christian message," while for a second principal, having a "propensity for reconciliation" was an important characteristic related to philosophy.

The three senior administrators interviewed, as well as five practicing principals, commented on the importance of the principal's "own commitment to the objectives of Catholic education." In the selection of successful candidates for the principalship, one senior administrator identified seeking "a person who is and demonstrates that they are a dedicated Catholic." A second senior administrator emphasized that separate schools had "a particular vested interest" in finding the kind of person "who's living a Christian experience and is Christian in his or her dealing with people."

Five principals commented on personal commitment to the Catholic philosophy in references related to the presence of the faith dimension in their personal lives. One principal viewed the role of a principal in a Catholic school as "an extension of your own Catholicity, your own attitude. It's the way we live our lives." Another principal, who considered it "incumbent upon the principals to be the Catholic role models that we've hired them for" viewed "living the faith" an important aspect of the principal's role. Personal commitment was important for a third principal who commented, "If we are going to be Catholic educators we have to [reflect] what we're saying." One principal considered demonstrating a commitment to the Catholic philosophy an on-going task for principals. For this individual, Catholic leadership was a task that "you've got to do all the time."

Academic qualifications and knowledge. Senior administrators and aspiring principals referred to both academic qualifications and knowledge while the comments from practicing principals were concerned with knowledge considered important for principals. The senior administrators identified the educational aspects considered important in the selection criteria for successful candidates to the principalship. In references to their personal preparation for a career leading to the principalship, aspiring principals indicated academic qualifications which they regarded as beneficial to achieving their career goals.

All six aspiring principals perceived a Master of Education degree as important for attaining a principal position. Two of these respondents had completed a master's program while a third one was in the process of finishing the thesis requirement. All of the three aspiring principals without this degree indicated having plans to begin studies in the near future. The significance of post-graduate studies was identified by two of the three senior administrators who specified that the possession of a Master of Education degree should be a criterion for selection of principals in this school system.

Five participants mentioned that principals should be "knowledgeable" and "competent" in performing tasks associated with the position. In the views of two practicing principals, a principal was expected "to be knowledgeable about specific topics" or "competent" in "one or two specialized areas for credibility." Although two senior administrators referred to professional knowledge as a preferred quality, one was concerned with "the knowledge they [principals] have about the learning process, the teaching process, the educational issues," while the second one indicated the need for "a very thorough working knowledge of the operation that they're [principals] managing."

Within the category of personal qualities and skills, only limited agreement was evident among the participants regarding which personal attributes were desirable in a principal. Ten participants indicated that an important quality of principals involved exhibiting confidence and self-assurance. The commitment to a Catholic philosophy through a demonstrated lifestyle was considered essential by most principals and all senior administrators. The sole response from the aspiring principal indicated that the Catholic nature of the principal's role was either not as important to, or not fully understood by, these participants.

There appears to be considerable variation in relation to what principals should be knowledgeable about. Some participants related knowledge to credibility while the senior administrators commented on knowledge in conjunction with the school operation. Both the aspiring principals and the senior administrators regarded post-graduate studies as important academic qualifications for principals.

Organizational

Qualities and skills identified as those which enabled the individual to focus on tasks related to the operation of a formal organization were presented in the organizational category. Of the three categories related to personal qualities and skill, fewest comments were concerned with the organizational aspect. Those that were made related to management skills, system perspective, and political skills.

Management skills. Other than one aspiring principal, all participants mentioned skills associated with the management aspect of the principalship. Some overlap with the administrative tasks of the principal was evident. Comments were related to skills involved in problem solving, decision making, general administrative duties, time management, crisis management and planning.

All six practicing principals, all three senior administrators and two aspiring principals mentioned problem solving and decision making. The terms problem solving and decision making were used interchangably by participants referring to these two skills. Although, in most instances, they identified problem solving and decision making as important to the performance of the job of the principal, without expanding on the meaning of the particular skill, some participants presented more descriptive information. Two senior administrators and one practicing principal indicated that principals needed to be "decisive" and "not wishy washy" when making decisions. According to one principal and a senior administrator, the best interests of the school and the students were deemed to be appropriate guiding principles in problem solving and decision making situations. For another senior administrator, the use of "sound judgement" was critical for principals engaged in problem solving and decision making activities.

Skills concerning administrative duties of principals were identified by all six practicing principals, two senior administrators and three aspiring principals. Comments regarding general school management skills and time management skills were made by the participants with little elaboration. In relation to crisis management, the ability to "think on your feet" was important to two aspiring principals and one practicing principal. Five participants mentioned that a principal should be flexible and adaptable in administrative situations.

Six participants identified planning as a skill related to the achievement of school goals and objectives. Three senior administrators referred to the importance of being able to set goals and to have the determination to achieve them. The skill of planning was also identified by one principal and the aspiring principal. One senior administrator and a practicing principal commented on "the ability to plan in a longer range fashion," while a second senior administrator referred to being able "to anticipate and read the winds of change." The senior administrators and one principal associated planning with having "a vision" or direction regarding the aims and objectives for the school.

System perspective. Although there were relatively few remarks regarding an overall system perspective, a majority of all three participant groups indicated that an understanding of the system was important. Ten interviewees made reference to knowing the interrelations between various components of the school system. One principal and a senior administrator commented on the importance of balancing the needs of individual schools with those of the system. Respondents emphasized the importance of "working for a system" rather than in an individual school, "being an enthusiastic spokesperson for the school system" and "seeing the system as a whole." One aspiring principal considered it important to learn about the structure of the school system. A senior administrator identified professional development regarding a system perspective as essential because "people tend to focus inward on their own school rather than outward and have a much broader context within which to work."

Political skills. Responses from four principals, two aspiring principals and two senior administrators related to the political nature of education. For all four principals, "being politically astute" in matters of the community and the school board was a desired ability. For these participants, being "aware of the political changes which impact on the school" enabled the principals to manage the school organization more effectively. Remarks by the aspiring principals indicated their desire "to learn what's going on" within the field of education.

Two senior administrators identified "a sensitivity to the political scene" as essential for educational leaders. One senior administrator considered "the politics of education, an area that principals need to focus on more than ever before." A second respondent in this subject group, in discussing education as a political venture, referred to the obligations which principals have in "serving at various times, anywhere from five to seven different masters." For this individual, the political tasks involved balancing the "competing interests" of various constituencies associated with the educational organization. The participant indicated that political skills were critical for principals because education was "all politics."

Summary

Within the theme of qualities and skills considered desirable for principals, three categories were identified: interpersonal, personal and organizational. Interpersonal, or face-to-face interactions, involved human relation skills associated with the establishment of a positive relationship with the school and the projection of leadership. Particular qualities and skills related to diplomacy, communication and conflict resolution were mentioned by the interviewees. Being perceived as a leader by various constituents was also considered a critical quality for principals.

Personal characteristics included skills and qualities which individuals bring of themselves to situations. Although participants presented many personal qualities and skills, there was little agreement regarding the characteristics which could be considered critical for principals. For this particular school district, personal commitment to a Catholic philosophy was viewed as essential by the senior administrators and principals. Several interviewees identified post-graduate studies as relevant in the academic background of principals.

Organizational qualities and skills were related to the operation of the educational organization. Participants commented on skills associated with management or administrative tasks. An understanding of the school as a whole, integrated system, as well as an awareness of the political nature of education, were perceived as important skills by many participants.

Chapter Summary

A general perspective of a principalship was described in terms of the functions or duties performed by principals and the personal qualities and skills considered essential for a person in the position of principal.

Six major task areas for principals were identified as administration, curriculum, supervision, public relations and communications, Catholic educational leadership and staff development. Specific duties related to these broader responsibilities included responding to directives by central office personnel or external agencies; administrative tasks related to scheduling, budgeting and transportation; delegating tasks; implementing curriculum; supervising staff, students and programs; communicating with people within and outside of the school; and facilitating the personal and professional growth of staff members. Of significance were the responsibilities related to Catholic educational leadership, in particular the critical task of the development of the school as a faith community.

Personal qualities and skills considered essential in a principal included skills in human relations, leadership, management and politics. Specific personal traits such as integrity, understanding, confidence, compassion and humour were also identified as important for principals. An understanding of and commitment to the philosophy and values inherent in a Catholic school system particularly significant.

CHAPTER FIVE

PREPARING FOR A PRINCIPALSHIP

In this chapter data analysis related to specific experiences which provide relevant leadership opportunities and activities considered to be appropriate for training prior to assuming a principalship are presented. The theme encompassing leadership experiences is further divided into sub-categories: the educational setting, the professional organization and the community. Preparatory activities are discussed from the aspects of content and delivery methods.

Leadership Experiences

Relevant leadership experience was defined by one senior administrator as:

> experiences or opportunities in which the individual has been positive . . . in a situation. Where he or she is able to move others commonly toward defined objectives and in so doing, utilizes skills and abilities to bring out the best in those people and move them along the common direction toward those defined goals. . . . The person is positive in a position of some influence, being able to give direction, giving guidance, acting as the head.

A second administrator encouraged persons aspiring to a principalship to seek experiences that "allowed the individual to co-ordinate and organize the activities of others." For the aspiring principals, it was important to choose experiences which allowed individuals to work with other people as well as those which "gave you a little sense of responsibility and having charge of whatever you're doing."

Three environments were identified as sources for experiences where aspiring principals could gain practice in exercising leadership: the educational setting, the professional organization, and the community. In comments related to the three sources for gaining relevant administrative experiences, eight of the fifteen participants emphasized the importance of practical, on-the-job experiences. Within each of these sources, references were made to the certain skills and general knowledge which could be learned and subsequently transferred to the position of principal.

The Educational Setting

Participants identified the individual school, the school system, the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education of the local university as viable sources for providing leadership experiences.

All fifteen respondents indicated that school experiences were a means to acquire the skills and knowledge which could be transferred to the principalship. Teaching experience "across as many different divisions as possible" was mentioned by all six principals, four aspiring principals and two senior administrators. Through a variety of teaching assignments, the participants believed that prospective principals could learn about curriculum issues, the teaching and learning process, and interacting with all age groups and ability levels of students.

Nine participants viewed as important "a knowledge of how curriculum works and how to develop curriculum and implement it in your school." For one practicing principal, the knowledge of "sound theories of learning that you can use as a basis for developing programs" was essential while a second principal referred to "learning the scope and sequence of curriculum."

One principal felt that "teachers who manage a classroom and teach and plan creatively have got a lot of necessary skills to be a principal." A second principal remarked about the benefits of interacting with students of different age groups so as to "give you a handle on how they behave and how they should be dealt with." One senior administrator identified looking for "knowledge . . . about the learning process, the teaching process," as a selection criterion for applicants for the position of principal. Three of the aspiring principals believed that a wide range of teaching experiences would be advantageous for their future career goals.

In addition to specific teaching experiences, three principals and five aspiring principals made reference to working with a number of different principals and in a variety of organizational situations. For one principal, interactions with various principals could provide "inservice" opportunities for prospective principals where "principals can coach you [prospective principals] in various areas." An aspiring principal perceived working in various schools beneficial because "you learn to see the total system a little bit more clearly." For all six aspiring principals, interaction with various people in many different schools provided valuable experiences for using "a lot of interpersonal skills."

For fourteen participants the school setting offered individuals seeking a principalship the opportunity to request "some sort of school responsibilities" in which prospective principals could practise different skills related to the organization, management, supervision and co-ordination of people. References to implementing and developing curriculum, organizing excursions, coaching school teams, chairing divisions and coordinating science fairs and oral communication festivals were suggested as specific examples of school level responsibilities which aspiring principals should assume. Several respondents indicated that it was incumbent upon the individual to take the initiative in seeking these leadership experiences. In discussions concerned with personal career preparation, all six aspiring principals referred to school activities which they had sought and for which they had been responsible.

Two aspiring principals mentioned that working with student teachers in their classroom was an experience which gave one practice in some skills associated with the principalship. In particular, both respondents indicated that writing reports about the performance of the student teacher was similar to the evaluation task of principals. Personal interaction with student teachers was viewed as an opportunity to develop interpersonal skills which could be transferred to a principalship.

Within this particular school system, schools without an assigned vice-principal have a staff member appointed as the teacher designate who represents the principal in his or her absence. Three of the six aspiring principals had served as a teacher designate in those schools in which they had taught. Although a fourth participant had not yet had the experience of being a teacher designate, the position was identified as one which provided relevant leadership experience. This person mentioned that future plans included seeking the opportunity to serve as a teacher designate. All six aspiring principals made reference to a teacher designate position as a possible leadership experience; however, only one of the practicing principals mentioned this role. None of the senior administrators included the teacher designate in the definition of leadership experiences.

In addition to activities at the school level, fourteen participants considered the school system as an additional educational source for the acquisition of leadership experiences. All but one practicing principal viewed system level membership on curriculum committees, particularly in the role of committee chairperson, as a way to learn about developing and implementing curriculum as well as about working with people. One aspiring principal, who had served as chairperson of a curriculum committee, identified having to manage a budget, an administrative task which principals performed, as a valuable experience.

Individual participants made reference to prospective principals seeking responsibility for coordinating system events. At the system level, a science fair, an oral communication festival and a track and field meet were specifically identified. One practicing principal and an aspiring principal both considered having a system level position, such as consultant or co-ordinator, valuable experience for gaining a better understanding of "all the interrelations" within the system.

An aspiring principal and a senior administrator suggested the Ministry of Education as an additional educational setting in which leadership experience could be gained. Working on committees at the Ministry level and being seconded to a position with the Ministry of Education were the two opportunities identified by the respondents as relevant to the curriculum process and the area of interpersonal skills. For one aspiring principal, teaching in the Faculty of Education of the local university offered a further experience in an educational situation and related to acquiring management skills as well as increased knowledge of the teaching-learning process.

The possibility of leadership experiences at both the school and the system levels was acknowledged by all but one participant. The three senior administrators identified both of these sources in defining those leadership experiences considered as selection criteria for applicants to the principalship. All six aspiring principals had undertaken leadership experiences at both the school level and the system level during their personal preparation for the position of principal. All six principals concurred on the importance of leadership experience at the school level while five of them referred to system level experiences as beneficial to acquiring skills and knowledge transferable to the performance of the job of principal.

The Professional Organization

The professional organization was viewed as a source for gaining practical leadership experience. All three senior administrators, five of the six aspiring principals and one of the six practicing principals included references to experiences gained in the professional associations. For this particular school system, the teachers are members of either the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (O.E.C.T.A.), or l'Association des enseignants et des enseignantes franco-ontariens (A.E.F.O.), which are affiliates of the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Although only one practicing principal mentioned involvement in the teachers' federation as a possible leadership experience, these roles were regarded as important selection criteria by all three senior administrators. The senior administrators "recognized in leadership competitions" involvement in the local and provincial activities of O.E.C.T.A. and A.E.F.O. Leadership roles related to the professional associations were defined by one senior administrator as "an executive position, committee leadership position, provincial leadership position." A second senior administrator included "being the head of the local bargaining unit, being President of the local chapter of the Federation" as "parallel experiences where they're [prospective principals] going to get a taste of what leadership involves."

In describing leadership experiences which they perceived of assistance in preparing them for the principalship, the five aspiring principals noted that they had held positions on either the local executive of the teachers' federation or the various committees of the professional organization. For some of the participants, committee roles involved both chairing and serving as a member of federation committees.

The Community

Ten interviewees made reference to leadership roles in the community. All three senior administrators, five aspiring principals, and two practicing principals identified assuming leadership positions in the community as relevant for acquiring skills and knowledge which, as one senior administrator stated, "would be transferable to a leadership position here [within the school system]." Specific roles, which were perceived as providing opportunities for prospective principals to gain pertinent leadership skills and knowledge, included volunteer work and work with charitable organizations. One senior administrator defined this type of leadership activity as "providing leadership in public bodies" where an individual was "running on personal time, a fairly major operation."

Of the five aspiring principals who indicated that leadership in community organizations would be of benefit to a principalship, four of the participants had been involved in some aspect of community leadership. This included volunteer work, involvement with community sports leagues and assuming the presidency of a large charitable organization. The two practicing principals mentioned community involvement with no further elaboration.

Two aspiring principals also referred to the benefits gained from having other jobs in addition to teaching. For both of these individuals, many management and interpersonal skills were developed through jobs outside of the educational field. One respondent, who had the opportunity to work with older people, credited this experience with "[giving] you a lot of confidence and a lot of knowledge." A second aspiring principal, who had worked in the summer in non-educational positions, indicated that the company "placed a great deal of emphasis on me and responsibility."

Summary

Opportunities in the educational setting to gain leadership experience relevant to a principalship included chairing or participating in committees, a diverse teaching portfolio, work experience in the Ministry of Education and administrative positions such as a vice-principalship or teacher designate. Additional leadership experiences could be gained through involvement in the executive of the teachers' associations, parish activities or community efforts.

Pre-service Preparation Activities

All fifteen participants identified components they considered to be appropriate for a pre-service training program for principals in the particular school district. The comments of the senior administrators, the practicing principals and the aspiring principals focussed on the content or knowledge areas which should be included in a pre-service preparation course for principals, as well as on various modes which would accommodate the delivery of the proposed program. Most of their views related to program content and delivery modes.

Content

In suggesting possible topics for inclusion in a pre-service training program for principals, the participants identified three major areas of concern: the role and functions of the principal in a Catholic school; internal and external laws which have an impact on education; and personal career planning and preparation for leadership competitions.

The Catholic School Principal

All fifteen participants indicated that the functions and responsibilities inherent in the role of a principal should be included in a pre-service training program. The remarks of principals noted that the six functions related to the role of the principal "would be a base" on which to structure a pre-service program. For the three senior administrators, specific references should be made to "the role of the principal in a Catholic school as opposed to a principal in a public school." Some of the participants remarked about the nature of the role of the principal in general, while other participants identified specific functions and skills which should be incorporated into a pre-service training program. For one senior administrator, it was important that the program "give them [prospective principals] an overview of what's involved in the job" while a second senior administrator spoke of "the components of that role [the role of the principal]" as possible content topics.

Several respondents identified the importance of including an understanding of the functions of a principal related to curriculum, communications, staff development and special education. In the case of staff development and special education, three participants referred to these aspects of the principal's role with no elaboration. However, others offered more detailed observations concerning curriculum and communication. Five aspiring principals, two practicing principals and one senior administrator considered knowledge about the curriculum process to be an important aspect a preparation program. Their views were expressed by one aspiring principal who asserted that a training program should include an awareness "of how curriculum works and how to develop curriculum and implement it in your school."

Communication responsibilities were also regarded as essential by three principals, three aspiring principals and one senior administrator. The senior administrator felt that although persons aspiring to the position of principal "bring some innate skills as communicators," a training program should present and provide practice for "the role of communication, identifying existing audiences, but then identifying different modes, frequencies, and examining existing communication programs." Other participants referred to the inclusion of certain aspects of the communication function of a principal, such as public speaking; awareness of specific audiences including the students, parents and the community; and public relations in general.

Examples of distinct tasks for which training could be provided, mentioned by ten participants, included budgeting, timetabling, teacher evaluation, bussing, fund raising and discipline. The concern of one practicing principal, who considered the need to offer "some really good idea and training on the budgetary process," was also identified by five aspiring principals who regarded the school budget as one task for which instruction was essential. Teacher evaluation was another particular area which four aspiring principals described as critical in a training program. Writing reports "fairly and objectively," evaluation techniques and the requirements of the school district were noted by four aspiring principals and one senior administrator as aspects of teacher evaluation on which a pre-service program for principals could focus.

In addition to specific functions and tasks related to the principalship, eleven participants identified several skills in which some training should be given. Individual responses made reference to time management, decision-making, problem-solving, processing administrative matters and developing political skills. Four aspiring principals, three practicing principals and two senior administrators indicated the importance of preparation in the area of interpersonal skills. One senior administrator, who suggested "any kind of training in human relations skills," specifically identified "skills of relating to people, dealing with people to reach your objective by dealing with people, motivating them, resolving conflict."

Particular mention was made of Catholic leadership by the three senior administrators, two practicing principals and two aspiring principals. Remarks focussed on examining the purpose of Catholic schools, "the Catholicity issue of our system" and an understanding of the "philosophy of education especially in a Catholic system." One senior administrator identified "the Catholic component" as something missing from university and Ministry of Education courses and suggested that "the faith dimension would be the most obvious" focus for a Catholic school system in developing a pre-service program for principals.

Laws Affecting Education

Thirteen participants commented on the importance of knowledge of internal and external legislation which impacts on the school system. All six practicing principals, five aspiring principals and two senior administrators indicated that a principal training program should incorporate an understanding "about legislation, and your [the principal] rights, pupils' rights, parents' rights and all the other legislation that is incumbent upon principals to know."

Although many participants referred to school law only in general, one senior administrator described internal laws as "the Acts and Regs [Regulations of the Ministry of Education] and Board policies that govern the operation of a school." An aspiring principal described the legal aspect of a training program as encompassing "new Bills coming out, legislation coming in, [and] how it affects schools." The Education Act of the provincial government and the school district's Policy Manual were also identified by several participants. For one aspiring principal current documents and issues emanating from the Ministry of Education were perceived as indicative of future legislation which could be formulated from the various perspectives of the Ministry of Education; thus knowledge of Ministry directions should be included in a preparation program for principals.

When discussing legislation from governing bodies outside of education that affect school operations, participants mentioned several Acts and Regulations. The various laws, upon which participants did not elaborate, included the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Young Offenders Act, the Family and Child Services Act, and WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System). References were also made to legal responsibilities related to child abuse, sexual abuse and teacher assault.

Personal Preparation

Eight participants, including two senior administrators, two practicing principals and four aspiring principals, commented on the inclusion of topics related to assisting individuals in personal career planning for the principalship. Remarks centered on the selection process for this school system, the expectations of the school district for principals, and the usefulness of self-assessment instruments for personal career planning.

One senior administrator, one practicing principal and an aspiring principal noted that the school system's Selection of Leadership Personnel policy could serve as a content component of a pre-service program for principals. An understanding of this policy was considered important to prepare candidates to "know the policy requirements" and the system's expectations related to "the criteria, the process, the qualities one would want in a leader, the kinds of experiences that they [the aspiring principals] should look for." Related to the selection process, a practicing principal included instruction in interview skills and resume writing for prospective principals.

Four respondents referred to gaining an understanding of the expectations which the school district held for its principals. One practicing principal indicated that there were "Board expectations, that each school will participate in certain Board functions, . . . and unless you know those offhand, they kind of fall into your lap a little late." One aspiring principal considered an understanding of system expectations critical, while a second participant in this same subject group felt "that an expectation of what the Board wants" should be incorporated into the content component of a pre-service program for principals.

Two senior administrators and one practicing principal included references to self-assessment tests such as "interest inventories [and] personality inventories." While one senior administrator felt that "they [self-assessment tools] can be useful in helping people," a practicing principal indicated that the inclusion of self-assessment instruments could provide a better self understanding which in turn could contribute to more effective job performance. A second senior administrator identified "examining yourself in relationship to your style" as a training component.

Within the content component of a pre-service program, all participants suggested specific topics which should be included. The role of the principal, particularly the principal of a Catholic school, was mentioned by all fifteen respondents. Specific functions related to a principalship, as well as some skills considered to be applicable to the role of a principal, were also identified by the respondents. Legal responsibilities of the principal, as determined by legislation within and outside of the educational setting, were noted by a majority of participants. Eight individuals also commented on including both an awareness and understanding of the school district's expectations regarding leadership and individual career planning in a pre-service program for principals.

Delivery Modes

The views related to delivering a pre-service program for principals included references to both appropriate methods of teaching and the personnel considered suitable to delivering the content identified by the participants. Most of these views revolved around teaching-learning methods and program presenters.

Teaching-learning Methods

All participants commented on appropriate ways to deliver a pre-service program for principals. Although fourteen of the participants mentioned seminars or workshop sessions as one method of presenting the content of a preparation program, most interviewees were also supportive of developing a course which was participatory in nature and allowed involvement by those aspiring to a principalship.

Within the seminar presentations, five aspiring principals, three practicing principals and one senior administrator suggested including case studies, role playing, simulation exercises and in-basket activities to provide for more active participation by those taking the course. One principal advocated "some presentation but after that there is some group problem-solving. That there's constant input from the experiences of the person with some experience to the person with no experience." For this participant individual methodology which followed an adult education format was considered important.

An aspiring principal thought group sessions were an effective mode of delivery because "you have to have the interaction between people. You have to be able to sit and debate things." For one senior administrator, workshop sessions were viewed as methods "to develop a sensitivity and an awareness" to specific topics. A second senior administrator proposed adding role playing situations within the seminars to allow "practical ways to put the theory into practice" without adding stress and tension.

Both of the senior administrators mentioned a counselling session within the preparation program to "help people determine whether this kind of career is for them, and [to] assist people in even shaping the directions of their studies." One senior administrator viewed the counselling session as an opportunity "to point out to the person . . . the strengths and weaknesses" and aspects of the individual's personality which might have to be modified. The counselling session was viewed as "the opportunity [for individuals] to ask for advice and an assessment of where they're at, where they might go."

In addition to seminars, several participants suggested various assignments which would reinforce knowledge acquisition. An aspiring principal and a senior administrator indicated that students in the training program should be required to write an educational philosophy, develop a course of study and create a timetable. For five respondents, professional reading was mentioned as an appropriate method for learning about particular topics.

All fifteen participants identified practical assignments or a practicum in the school setting as an effective means to gain experience. One senior administrator suggested that "there are opportunities within a school . . . [where] voluntarily the individual [could] get involved in the administration of the school in an informal fashion and get that kind of experience." A practicing principal felt that persons aspiring to a principalship could be assigned "something in the school of a leadership nature." Another practicing principal indicated that initiative could be promoted in a training program by encouraging program participants to ask the principal to "spend a day in the office . . . or take over the office" in the absence of the school administrators. This was viewed as a means to incorporate practical experience into the program design.

An aspiring principal considered it important that participants in a preparation program be placed "in a position where you have to deal with certain situations." This view was expressed by all six aspiring principals, five practicing principals and two senior administrators. To provide concrete experiences related to the job of the principal, participants commented on the desirability of including some form of internship or apprenticeship. One senior administrator described the internship as "a process, where the individual can work along with and shadow a principal. It would have to be for short terms, probably . . . a week or two weeks." The second senior administrator referred to the possibility of "a sort of apprenticeship program where teachers are released to work with principals for periods of time."

Several respondents proposed "actually [putting] them [the aspiring principals] in a school for a period of time just like student teachers are put into schools." Although one practicing principal and an aspiring principal suggested one year for the term of the internship, comments of other individuals indicated one or two week periods. While some of the participants expressed concern about the logistics, the practicability, and the cost of putting an internship program into place the majority regarded this method as an ideal way to acquire "training on the job" opportunity.

Six participants identified utilizing the vice-principal and teacher designate positions as additional means to gain practical experience and proposed their inclusion in a pre-service program. One aspiring principal stated that persons who wish to become principals "could be given a month as a teacher designate where they would have to solve some problems with the principal." Other respondents suggested that the positions of vice-principal and teacher designate as a method to promote practical experience but did not elaborate.

Twelve participants indicated that the selection of a mentor was an additional way to learn about the role of the principal, as well as to obtain personal guidance and support. One practicing principal, who had chosen a mentor following an appointment to a principalship, recommended establishing such a relationship "because they can give you all kinds of little tips that experienced principals have for the day to day management of the school . . . ideas about all kinds of things, like where are you going to get experiences, where you can get training, what kinds of political things you should be aware of."

A support group and a professional network, although different from the mentor relationship, were identified as additional learning modes. A support group was considered by one individual as "valuable and where you learn things." A practicing principal and an aspiring principal referred to networking as a means for "sharing some of their [those in the network] expertise with other people that are coming up in the system."

Program Presenters

Four practicing principals, four aspiring principals and two senior administrators commented on who should present the workshop sessions of the pre-service program for principals. Eight of the ten respondents indicated that "people in the field as opposed to theorists" would be considered appropriate persons for delivering a pre-service program. Practicing principals, superintendents and others in leadership positions were specifically mentioned as possible program deliverers.

Some participants included personnel from the Ministry of Education, the Faculty of Education and "outside people for areas of expertise." Three interviewees identified lawyers for dealing with legal aspects of the pre-service program, while one practicing principal considered "bringing [in] some Toastmasters" as appropriate for public speaking segments of a training course.

A practicing principal and an aspiring principal suggested that the students themselves should be responsible for both presenting and planning part of the curriculum of a preparation program for principals. The aspiring principal felt that the students should "give the instructor some suggestions about what are some key problems," and the practicing principal proposed that "they [the students] should formulate their curriculum to a certain extent."

Chapter Summary

Leadership experience was identified by the senior administrators, as a selection criterion for successful candidates seeking the principalship in this particular school system. Principals indicated those leadership activities which they considered beneficial to performing the tasks and duties related to the position of principal. Aspiring principals specified which leadership opportunities they had pursued or perceived to be advantageous to their career goal of a principalship.

The acquisition of organizational and management skills, especially in interpersonal relations, was a concern of all the aspiring principals and all the senior administrators as well as three of the six principals. Various aspects of the curriculum process were referred to by nine participants.

All participants identified seeking responsibilities at the school level as important. Most respondents also considered system level activities, particularly involvement on curriculum committees or organizing system events, of assistance in gaining skills which could be used in performing the job of a principal.

In order to deliver a preparation program for principals, participants referred to seminars and workshop sessions as main delivery modes with student participation and involvement built into the course. Individual counselling sessions for participants were also identified by two senior administrators. For practical, on-the-job training, participants suggested incorporating an internship modelled on teacher training methods where aspiring principals spend short periods of time in a school experiencing real situations which principals regularly face. The use of a mentor, support group or professional network were also noted as additional learning methods. The majority of participants stated that those persons who were practicing in the field would be appropriate program presenters, although personnel with expertise in specific areas could be brought in for certain aspects of the program. Allowing those taking the course to present and plan a portion of the program also had some support.

CHAPTER SIX

PROPOSALS FOR PRINCIPAL TRAINING

The suggested content and delivery modes for the training of principals attempt to fulfill the needs identified in the data. Support for the proposals are found generally in the conceptions of a Catholic school principal and in training requirements. Various elements as derived from the data are presented and are followed with the further support of specific references in literature. The components of the principal training recommendations focus on content and the methods of delivery.

Content Areas

Four broad categories form the content component of the proposed principal training program for the specified school district: the roles and functions of a principal, Catholic educational leadership expectations, legislation impacting on a school principal, and personal preparation for leadership.

Roles and Functions of a Principal

For the particular school system for which the training program is suggested, the roles and functions are derived from the Policy Manual, specifically the job description of the principal and the principal evaluation policy. In addition, general activities in the job performance of principals are identified in suggestions from the participants in the study.

Topics related to the role of the principal are classified as: administration, curriculum, communications and public relations, supervision and staff development, special education and Catholic educational leadership. The latter area of responsibility is discussed as a separate element of the content component. Although described within other content categories, special education is discussed as a separate topic to more clearly address the significance of special education tasks. The recommended program topics reflect both the managerial and instructional aspects of a principalship as identified in various sources in the literature and also acknowledges the religious leadership dimension of Catholic school principals.

Administration. Several managerial tasks and skills within the administrative role of principals are relevant topics for a training program. The budgetary process which encompasses tasks of preparation, management, record keeping and control is a major aspect of a principalship for which training is required. Ordering and purchasing responsibilities inherent in the role of principal should be addressed in preparation activities for prospective principals. The specific budget codes, particular categories and strategies to allocate the financial resources are additional topics which could be presented in a principal training program. The budgetary system used by the school board should be reviewed with aspiring principals. Course participants could be given the opportunity to develop and administer a budget either in their own school or in a simulated situation in a class setting.

Reports related to attendance, pupil registration, Ministry of Education statistical reports, fund raising and other financial issues, and other administrative matters are a second area of focus for preparing principals. Course participants should be presented with and instructed in completing relevant forms related to the administration of the school. Developing and implementing aims and objectives for the individual school is also an area in which training is necessary.

Transportation responsibilities and processes, scheduling, knowledge of general office procedures and timetabling for schools of different sizes and operating styles (rotary, semi-rotary, non-rotary) are further administrative topics that should be included in a program for preparing prospective principals. Accommodating collective agreement and policy requirements should be presented in a training program for aspiring principals.

Staff meetings are also important to the preparation of principals. Setting an agenda, conducting meetings, enlisting assistance and co-operation of the staff are some topics which should be incorporated into a training program for prospective principals. Specific skills associated with the administrative role of a principal which should be addressed include time and stress management, delegation, planning and crisis management.

Curriculum. The curriculum process involves both development and implementation. A specific model -- curriculum, review, development and implementation (CRDI) -- has been adopted by the Ontario Ministry of Education and school systems in the province. A significant preparation program topic should involve developing an understanding of the CRDI model which focusses on implementation and evaluation. Another relevant topic is knowledge related to adapting and expanding school system curriculum guidelines specifically to school level requirements. Skills training related to monitoring and facilitating change related to curriculum responsibilities should also be addressed. This particular topic can assist principals in the implementation of curriculum initiatives and in ensuring the presence of innovations in long range plans and classroom practices.

Although not specifically proposed by participants in the study, an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school system's curriculum department is a relevant topic. The acquisition of information regarding available personnel and material resources is pertinent to planning, implementation and evaluation tasks.

Supervision and staff development. Supervision of staff, programs and students is the focus of this particular component of the principal training program. Staff supervision also includes evaluation tasks of principals and necessitates instruction in knowledge and implementation of the school system's policy related to both formative and summative evaluation. Training in classroom visitation, teacher conferences, report writing and an understanding of objective evaluation techniques are critical.

The topic of staff development demands the provision of instruction to principals aimed at assisting teachers to further their professional growth through various activities. Techniques associated with the provision of in-service activities should be included in the content of staff development. Some examples for inclusion in training prospective principals in the area of staff development include assisting staff to implement new teaching-learning strategies into the classroom, observing students to assess and program for individual and class needs, behaviour management techniques and accommodating students at various academic levels in a single classroom. Other topics which might be relevant to staff development could be solicited from the participants in the training program.

To enhance job performance in the area of program supervision strategies to monitor plans and classroom instruction, as well as the acquisition and distribution of resources, should be included in pre-service activities. Student supervision involves discipline, behaviour and student progress. Discipline techniques and strategies, the development of a school code of behaviour and methods to assess student progress are relevant topics for the principal training program.

The supervision and evaluation component includes instruction in the acquisition of skills in human relation, problem solving, motivation, conflict management and interpersonal activities. Learning opportunities designed to prepare aspiring principals to affirm, support and encourage others in the school organization should be provided.

Communications and public relations. Oral and written communication is a critical topic area for the proposed principal training program. Specific modes of communication such as newsletters, memos, letters, parent handbooks, face-to-face meetings and open houses are proposed for program content. Various methods to foster good relations with the various audiences in the internal and external school community should be pursued. General marketing techniques and strategies for the school are also content components in which instruction is necessary, as is the incorporation of skills involving tact, diplomacy and political astuteness. A training program for prospective principals could incorporate public speaking activities and a variety of relevant writing assignments which would offer the participants practice in both the oral and written forms of communication.

Special education. The content component of special education contains knowledge of both instructional and administrative tasks. Specific legal aspects include school board policies, Ministry of Education legislation and memoranda, and documents from the school district's department of student services which directs special education issues.

A major preparation topic in special education should be the identification, placement and review process (IPRC) which outlines procedures related to exceptional students. Writing an individual educational program (IEP), accessing school system and community resources, and an overview of exceptionalities will be significant topics. An additional theme for a principal preparation program is the implication of special education on other task areas such as the modification and evaluation of student programs. Attention should be given to skills previously mentioned, including human relations, delegating, monitoring, evaluating and communicating are relevant to special education.

Support in the literature. Although the program content for the roles and functions of a principal is derived from the data, support for the identified components is found in the literature. Some writers propose general topics for principal training while others discuss more specific responsibilities.

The need for providing training programs at the school district level is acknowledged in various sources in the literature (Griffiths, 1988; Holdaway & Ratsoy, 1991; Leithwood & Avery, 1986; Musella, 1983). Leithwood and Avery (1986) reviewed in-service programs for Canadian principals and concluded that school systems should assume greater responsibility for principal education due to the theoretical nature of university graduate courses, the lack of post-graduate degrees for many aspiring principals and an absence of principal preparation by most provincial governments. Griffiths (1988), in proposing reform measures in educational administration, stated that universities and school districts should share the training responsibilities for school leaders as one way to integrate theory and practice and to offer more relevant preparation.

On the basis of a survey of school administrators across Canada, Musella (1983) concluded that training for principals was necessary before and after selection. He also concluded that school districts are charged with providing the required training. From surveys of senior administrators, Musella (1983) developed a list of content areas which include implementation strategies, curriculum and program evaluation, the change process, community needs, student evaluation, the teaching-learning process, operating procedures, school law, school district policies and Ministry of Education regulations.

In addressing pre-service and in-service education of principals by both universities and school districts, Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991) considered the practical aspects of a principalship as the jurisdiction of school district programs. They specifically identify teacher evaluation, financial management and community relations as possible content topics.

Gilbert et al (1977) the needs and training opportunities for educational leadership in Ontario. From the frequency of responses received they concluded that the content of training programs should include activities aimed at developing skills in politics, community relations, delegation and staff development.

While some literature supports varied content topics of a training program, other sources focus specifically on the administrative and instructional components of a principalship. Knowledge of administrative or management tasks is confirmed as essential by Pratt and Common (1986) who surveyed administrators in three southern Ontario school districts. The administrators' perceptions regarding the utility and necessity of specific topics in graduate and inservice programs generated thirteen topics. The study of school management was recognized as the most useful and ranked second to instructional management in terms of necessity. Similarly, Johnson and Snyder (1985) attempted to identify significant training needs for principals. In a survey of 210 elementary principals and assistant principals, the researchers found that management tasks were recognized as an important and desirable focus for preparatory activities for principals.

Support for managerial aspects of the role of a principal is offered by Manasse (1985) who contends that training in the development of operational management skills and organizational processes is essential for improvement in principal effectiveness. She also states that training in these skills and processes would assist aspiring principals in the application of political skills. Yukl (1982) identified the need to examine relevant technical, conceptual and interpersonal skills which can be developed in principal preparation programs.

In general, curriculum has been recognized as the instructional aspect of a principalship. Sources in the literature emphasize the instructional role of a principal as critical for effective school improvement and acknowledge the importance of its inclusion in preparation programs for principals. Pinero (1982) concluded that the legitimacy given to the instructional role of principals forces preparation programs to focus on this particular aspect. Murphy (1987) examined barriers to instructional leaders and found the curriculum or instructional skills received less emphasis than interpersonal skills. He proposed more balance in training programs so that all relevant content topics are adequately addressed.

Tasks and skills related to a principalship are proposed as major program topics and are supported by sources in the literature. Of significance for prospective Catholic school principals are topics concerned with the unique religious dimension of the school system.

Catholic Educational Leadership Expectations

Catholic leadership is a major focus for the proposed principal training program. This is one aspect of a principalship which receives no instruction from university preparation courses. Program content related to Catholic educational leadership should include: the nature of the Catholic school, articulating and implementing the Catholic school mission, expectations for Catholic school principals, the development of a faith community and Christian climate in the school, strategies to promote the visible symbols and social justice aspects in the Catholic school, the integration of the religious dimension into all curriculum areas, staff and personal faith development and formation, and the facilitation of partnerships with clergy, parents, and others in the school community. An awareness of the school system's Christian Living department is also of significance. Preparation in human relations skills, collaboration, shared leadership, goal planning and articulation, and faith formation are essential content areas for Catholic educational leadership.

Several sources in the literature attest to the necessity for specific content related to Catholic educational leadership in a principal training program. McMorrow (1987) discussed the importance of the spiritual development of principals who, he contends face greater demands than the religious priests, brothers, or sisters who were principals in earlier times. McMorrow proposed that training programs present an understanding of administrative styles and actions which would be consistent with the Catholic philosophy.

Trafford (1989) asserted that principal training programs should provide opportunities for aspiring principals to reflect, study and understand the heritage of and vision for Catholic schools. O'Brien (1990) supported instruction for prospective Catholic school principals in an understanding of the concepts of mission and ministry, focussing on the unique nature of Catholic schools, and developing interpersonal skills which could be applicable to interactions with all staff, including support personnel.

Drahmann (1984) proposed content components of training programs for Catholic school principals which emphasize ethical, moral and transcendent values. Strong philosophical, theoretical, social and spiritual development, and community relations skills are designated as essential program topics. Although not specific to Catholic schools, conclusions by Leithwood, Rutherford and van der Vegt (1986) are relevant to Catholic leadership. The authors asserted that school leaders must be trained to anticipate, initiate and shape vision for their schools, to exercise collaboration and to develop and sustain shared leadership.

Catholic educational leadership is a significant topic for the proposed principal training program. The religious dimension of the principalship which is not addressed in other preparation programs is critical for aspiring principals. A further topic for the content component is the legislative obligations for principals.

Legislation Impacting on a School Principal

Knowledge and awareness of several pertinent pieces of legislation are relevant to the content component of a preparation program for principals. Pertinent legal aspects derived from internal and external educational sources are appropriate topics. Program content should focus on: significant internal legislation from the Ministry of Education including the Education Act, specific Regulations, and various directives and memoranda; the policy manual of the school district; and legal obligations to teacher federations such as the Teaching Profession Act and collective agreements.

Related federal and provincial legislation topics affecting the role of a principal should include: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Young Offenders Act, the Family and Child Services Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). Attention to obligations regarding issues of child and sexual abuse is an essential content element.

Few sources in literature refer specifically to school law in district level training programs. Musella (1983) included knowledge of legislation as one of the ten highest ranked topics perceived as essential for persons aspiring to a principalship but did not elaborate. In a study designed to identify topics necessary to administrative practice Pratt and Common (1986) concluded that practitioners ranked school law as fourth of thirteen areas. Other references in literature mention school law as one of several courses offered in university or college programs (Daresh, 1988; Griffiths, 1988; Miklos, in press). Although the literature offers limited support for the inclusion of legislation impacting on principals as a content component, the significance of this aspect for participants in the study confirms it as a legitimate program topic. Personal preparation is also an important content area for a principal training program.

Personal Preparation for Principals

The fourth component of the content aspect of the proposed principal training program relates to personal preparation by individuals to assume a principalship. Incorporated as program topics are presentations which offer assistance for personal career planning; knowledge of the leadership selection process utilized by the particular school system; and an awareness of the school district's expectations for aspiring principals. An understanding of relevant experiences, skills, and qualities designated as valid for prospective principals, instruction in preparing for principal competitions and self-assessment instruments should also be included.

Sources in the literature lend some support for personal preparation in principal training programs. Gilbert et al (1977) identified both self assessment instruments and school board expectations as possible topics for preparing principals. Self assessment was also one of seven topics perceived as a training need by elementary principals in a study by Johnson and Snyder (1985). Daresh (1988) proposed a tri-dimensional model for training school administrators in which he discussed the use of learning style instruments and personal inventory instruments as relevant to the personal formation dimension of prospective principals.

The content element of the proposed preparation program for principals incorporates topics related to the task areas of a principalship in a specific school district. Of significance is the Catholic educational leadership component. An awareness of relevant legislation and personal preparation are two additional topic areas of a program designed to train prospective principals. The content components are derived in general from data collected from participants and supported by sources in literature. The second integral part of the preparation program proposes appropriate delivery modes.

Delivery Modes

The design of the delivery components of the principal training program involves two aspects: (a) the instructional mode which relates to methods and strategies of presentation in a classroom setting; (b) the experience aspect which presents aspiring principals with practical opportunities. As with the content component, general proposals have been derived from the data and supported with explicit references to the literature.

The Instructional Mode

A workshop or seminar format offers a reliable method to present knowledge and whole group learning experiences. Rather than relying heavily on lectures or discussions, program delivery should reflect various instructional methods of a participatory nature which promote active involvement by the prospective principals. Case studies, role playing, simulations, in-basket activities, specific assignments, group and individual tasks, and oral presentations would provide aspiring principals with more active learning experiences to acquire skills and knowledge.

Individual or group assignments which require prospective school leaders to perform actual principal tasks such as developing a course of study, creating a school timetable or developing a written philosophy of education should be considered as delivery modes. More structured instruction includes professional reading determined by course presentors, journal writing or maintaining a log. Counselling and feedback to course participants is also incorporated into the program delivery design.

Sources in the literature offer strong support for participative instructional methods. Although some of the instructional suggestions are derived from literature discussing pre-service programs at the university level, they are applicable to a school district level preparation program.

Daresh (1988) proposed that preparation programs utilize learning activities that provide students with a sense of reality of school leadership through participatory methods such as interviewing administrators, conducting surveys, or observing board meetings and legislative sessions. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1985) suggested the improvement of principal training through the use of simulations, in-baskets, case studies and group processes. The NASSP study concluded that these methods bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing students with the means to practice theory and apply skills and knowledge in a "safe" setting.

In an historical perspective of preparation programs, Murphy (forthcoming) confirmed the validity of using instructional methods to assist in overcoming the discrepancy between theory and practice. He specifically mentioned case study, simulations, field study and internships and cited work by Miklos which asserts that the major characteristics of active learning modes are more reality oriented. Murphy (forthcoming) further contended that university preparation programs do not provide the experience and knowledge perceived as relevant by practitioners thus implying the relevance of designing training programs based on data from specific course participants.

The use of journal writing and the development of an educational philosophy statement allows for reflective practice by aspiring principals, an important professional growth technique (Daresh, 1988; Hills 1975; Miklos, in press). In structuring a relevant course to simulate tasks inherent in a principalship, McIntosh, Maynes and Mappin (1989) encouraged the study of selected readings and the maintenance of a log to students to promote reflective practice. New instructional approaches included simulations and in-basket activities in a lab setting which replicate a principal's office. The authors attempted to structure a realistic work setting in which course participants experience some emotional involvement and sense of responsibility for their decisions and actions. Regular feedback is provided to students through debriefing sessions, written comments on in-basket problems and log books, and a performance appraisal by evaluators. Overall assessment of the program is positive with particular significance noted in presenting students the opportunity to exercise responsibility.

Calabrese and Bartz (1990) described an action learning model integrated with reflective practice to restructure educational administrational courses. The authors describe in specific detail instructional methods including role playing, case method, in-basket activities and management games which they conclude provide prospective principals with intellectual and practical experiences. Personal involvement by the learners, the integration of theory with workplace experience, simulated practice followed by modelling and coaching, and the application of skills and knowledge to practice are designed to prepare prospective principals to think and reflect on problems, process educational issues, and take action. Calabrese and Bartz (1990) conclude that "reflective practice is a unifying theme that can link training experiences" (p. 5) and a relevant strategy for principal preparation.

The literature confirms the need for participatory and active instructional methods and offers concrete examples of strategies and techniques which involve aspiring principals in learning opportunities. The concept of reflective practice is a significant theme to incorporate into the delivery mode. Real, field-based experience is a second delivery method designed to provide practice in the principal training program.

Field Experience

Three actual strategies for prospective principals to gain practice should be incorporated in a preparation program for principals. A practicum component involving specifically assigned or student-selected tasks could be performed at the program participant's own school over the length of the training program. An alternative form of practicum would ensure that the aspiring principals assume responsibility for the school for a day, either with the principal present or absent. The most appropriate location for this limited practice would be the student's own school.

An internship or apprenticeship should be a second strategy of the delivery component of the preparation program. This activity would involve prospective principals performing concrete experiences and tasks for one or two weeks, either in their present school or in another facility. The internship would also afford participants opportunities to observe and shadow the incumbent principal, as well to participate in problem-solving and decision-making situations. Release of the aspiring principals from teaching duties to enter into this aspect of the principal training program would be necessary.

Mentoring could serve as a relevant method to practice learned skills and knowledge through personal interactions. Mentors would offer support, advice, feedback and encouragement to aspiring principals. A carefully structured and developed mentor-protegee relationship should be an essential component of the delivery aspect of the principal preparation program.

Support for realistic practice is found in various sources of the literature. Murphy (forthcoming) concluded that the active nature of administrative tasks places great significance on practice to acquire, develop, and refine the skills inherent in job performance.

Manasse (1985) confirmed the necessity for realistic training situations which provide feedback, allow students to experience the pace and non-rational nature of the principalship. While specifically describing observation activities, mentoring and internships as relevant and practical, she also cautions preparation program designers to ensure that the experiences are both comprehensive and of sufficient length so the students encounter the complexity, pressure, and competing demands of the job.

In his tri-dimensional model for preparing school administrators, Daresh (1988) supports guided practice in the work setting. He contends that the field-based aspect of a training program fosters the acquisition and development of practical skills, the application of knowledge and students gain pertinent insights into school administration. Similarly NASSP (1985) described the value of a practicum, internships, and specific assigned activities which place students in the field. Particular mention is made of specific practicum assignments such as having aspiring principals plan staff development activities, prepare a school handbook and design a public relations strategy.

Various sources confirm the significance of mentoring in preparing school principals. Miklos (1988) cited several studies which contend that mentors are a significant factor in career advancement and support, and for reflective practice. The relevance of mentoring and shadowing to reflective practice is also confirmed by Calabrese and Bartz (1990). Daresh (1988) included mentoring in the personal formation component of his preparation model. He stresses the importance of an ideal mentor arrangement which provides positive effects for both the mentor and their protegees.

Barnett (1990) proposed that mentoring and shadowing are valid methods to provide aspiring principals with practical, experience-based activities and stresses the need for mentor relationships to focus on meaningful aspects of school administration. Mentoring is credited with developing competence and confidence, blending theory and practice, enhancing communication skills and learning the "tricks of the trade" (Playko, 1990).

Data from the study, supported by the literature, confirm the significance of field-based experiences. The inclusion of a practicum, an internship and mentoring for the principal training program offers practical experience, develops skills and provides prospective principals with a taste of the actual demands of a principalship.

Chapter Summary

Two major components are integrated into the proposed preparation program for principals in a particular school district: program content and program delivery modes. The content of the training program addresses five role aspects of a principalship, Catholic educational leadership expectations, legislation significant to school principals, and personal preparation of persons aspiring to a principalship. Sources in the literature support the relevance of the suggested content elements.

The delivery of the training program incorporates instructional strategies which are participatory in nature and allow for active involvement by prospective principals. Practicum experiences, internships and mentoring provide practical learning opportunities at the school level for persons aspiring to a principalship. In addition to confirming the benefits of actual experience, sources in the literature discuss the significance this particular mode of delivery to reflective practice.

In order for the proposed training program to successfully prepare persons for a principalship, the specified school district must provide adequate support in the form of release time for program participants. Release time, instructional methods, required materials and personnel to deliver the program imply costs which must be calculated. The extent of the school system's financial support impacts on the length of the training program. Sufficient time, attention and commitment by the school district to adequately address the proposed program and delivery components will contribute to the success of the principal training proposal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The concluding chapter presents a summary of the various components of the study. Several conclusions related to the nature of a principalship and relevant preparation activities, as well as implications for practice and research are suggested. Personal reflections regarding the process of the research and the principalship complete the study.

Summary

This study evolved from an assumption that a gap exists between the demands of a principalship and the knowledge, skills, and qualities brought to the position by aspiring principals. A further assumption was that the perceived discrepancy could be reduced through the provision of relevant learning activities prior to assuming a principalship. Four research questions guided the study and focussed on the tasks and functions of a principal; significant personal qualities and skills of principals; relevant leadership and appropriate pre-service preparation activities for principals; and the main components and delivery modes of a preparation program for principals. The central purpose of the study was to develop training proposals for use by a particular school district in preparing prospective principals.

Permission was obtained from senior administrative personnel in the Lakehead Catholic School Board to conduct research interviews. Participants were purposively selected and initially contacted by letter to obtain their consent. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three sets of participants from the Lakehead Catholic School Board: senior administrators, practicing principals, and individuals who had demonstrated aspirations for a principalship. The interviews focussed on the tasks, functions, skills, qualities and pertinent experiences considered significant in a principal. Relevant components of training activities were also explored. Referential materials, supplementary notes and journal references augmented the transcribed interviews

Each set of interviews was analyzed separately with the data being classified into broad categories defined by both the research and the interview questions. Comparisons among the three sets of data facilitated reorganization and clustering into similar elements from which individual category charts were developed.

In proposing relevant activities to assist aspiring principals to prepare for a principalship, an understanding of the tasks and functions inherent in the position was sought. The participants identified administrative or managerial functions, instructional responsibilities and specific expectations for Catholic school principals.

The administrative function of a principalship involved responding to directives from the central office staff, the Ministry of Education and other agencies external to the school. Specific tasks such as budget, scheduling, transportation and public relations were identified as the responsibility of the principal with some duties being delegated to appropriate staff.

Instructional responsibilities related to all aspects of the educational program including curriculum development and implementation, supervision duties and staff development. Curriculum development was viewed as a minor role compared to the implementation phase. The presence of school district produced guidelines required some adaptation by the principal and staff at the school level but there was little need to develop new curriculum. The area of implementation was a major focus for the principal who was placed in the role of motivator or facilitator. Duties related to supervision of staff, students and program included teacher evaluation, discipline procedures, student progress and program evaluation. In the instructional role, the principal also assumed responsibility for staff in-service, professional growth and individual teacher development.

Of significance to principals in the Lakehead Catholic School Board were the expectations for Catholic leadership. In addition to administration and instructional functions, a principal in this particular school district was considered to be the spiritual leader of the school. Responsibilities included developing and maintaining a positive school atmosphere which reflected the mission of a Catholic school, planning professional activities to foster faith formation and development for the staff, and ensuring the high visibility of specific Catholic symbols, practices, and programs throughout the school. The role of Catholic leadership was an important responsibility for the participants in the study.

In addition to identifying the tasks and functions associated with a principalship, specific personal qualities and skills considered important to job performance were explored. Three broad categories described significant skills and qualities: interpersonal, personal, and organizational.

Interpersonal characteristics referred to face to face interactions and encompassed skills related to human relations, communication, and leadership projection by the principal. Those skills and qualities which a principal brings to the situation were defined as personal. Academic background, knowledge, philosophy, values and personal traits were described within the personal category. Organizational skills focussed on abilities which assisted in job performance and included specific management skills such as decision making, problem solving, and planning. Also identified as organizational qualities were political astuteness and an understanding of the school system as an integrated whole.

Having specified the tasks, functions, skills and qualities relevant to a principalship, an examination of the types of experience and pre-service preparation for aspiring principals was undertaken. Opportunities to gain leadership experience were pursued in the educational setting, through involvement in the professional organization, and in community efforts or parish activities. Participation in various leadership activities was viewed as beneficial to acquiring and enhancing organizational and interpersonal skills.

Participants suggested content areas and delivery methods they perceived as appropriate pre-service preparation activities for principals. The tasks and responsibilities of a Catholic school principal, legislation impacting on the educational organization, personal career planning, and leadership expectations held by the specific school district were recommended as relevant topics.

Participatory delivery modes which promoted high involvement of the learner were essential. Particular mention was made of an internship, mentoring and practical, on the job experiences to place aspiring principals in realistic situations. The use of practitioners and experts, such as lawyers, rather than scholars was suggested as an important aspect of training delivery.

From the data presented by the three participant groups, specific components and delivery modes were proposed for inclusion in a principal training program offered by the Lakehead Catholic School Board. The content focussed on five role aspects of a principalship, the expectations inherent in Catholic educational leadership, significant legislation and personal preparation of prospective principals. The recommended delivery modes reflected participation and involvement of the learners in a seminar or workshop format. Practicum assignments, short-term internships and mentor relationships were recommended for the acquisition of practical experience at the school level.

Conclusions

Several conclusions related to the demands of a principalship, appropriate training activities and on-going in-service development were derived from the findings of the study.

1. The role of principal is as challenging and complex in the Lakehead Catholic School Board as for other principals. The comprehensive tasks, skills and qualities inherent in the position demand proper training and preparation for effective job performance.

2. The mission of a Catholic school imposes additional expectations on principals in this particular school district. Personal faith commitment and witness are key qualities expected in principals who assume the role of spiritual leader as well as traditional instructional and administrative functions.

3. Some of the qualities identified as desirable for a principalship are not amenable to training. They may be aspects of the personality of an individual or they may be developed during the socialization process experienced by the individual either prior to assuming a leadership position or during the initial phases. Specific qualities may include personal traits such as humour, compassion, friendliness and sincerity.

4. A gap exists between the defined demands of a principalship and the personal preparation of aspiring principals. The discrepancy can be narrowed through the provision of appropriate training activities by individual school districts, prior to individuals assuming a principalship

5. Specific content areas of the proposed training activities are more appropriate as in-service for incumbent principals than pre-service preparation of aspiring principals. For example, in the area of curriculum, pre-service may involve a general awareness and understanding of the curriculum process. After gaining experience in the actual curriculum demands of a principalship, in-service activities can be structured to address specific needs in the area of curriculum of individual principals.

6. A mentor relationship is a critical component of preparing principals. Care and attention to the suitable match of learners and mentors can benefit both participants. Mentoring can continue during the initial job entry phase of the learner.

7. Pre-service preparation does not conclude principal training. The literature emphasizes the significance of learning and utilizing reflective practice throughout one's career. This quality, as well as the value of continual learning, should be encouraged in both aspiring and incumbent principals.

Implications

This study into the role of a principalship and relevant training activities to prepare aspiring principals has implications for practice and research.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice have meaning for schools in general, are also specific to the particular school district and have some relevance for prospective principals.

Although the suggested training activities were developed from data specific to a particular school district, some of the findings may be applicable to other school situations. Those responsible for preparing principals need to be sensitive to the diversity of qualities, experience and knowledge of individual candidates. The different entry levels of aspiring principals imply that individualization within training activities be examined.

The school district's commitment and support for training must be visible and perceived as significant to those aspiring to a principalship. As an indication of the importance of principal preparation a senior administrator should be assigned responsibility for all phases of the training activities.

The development of a pool of well-qualified candidates is a key benefit for the school district which undertakes preparation of prospective principals. Attention must be given to the underlying costs involved in offering preparation activities such as the need for substitute teachers while the aspiring principals are released from classrooms to participate in various aspects of the training. If an internship is incorporated into the practice component, the financial costs as well as the impact on the educational program of students in the candidate's classroom must be considered. Fees for personnel other than school district employees to deliver components of the preparation program must be calculated. School systems intending to prepare persons to assume the position of principal need to examine carefully all aspects to develop the true cost of such a venture.

Once the training of prospective principals has been completed, the school district will have a pool of qualified candidates prepared to assume a principalship. Methods to sustain the enthusiasm and motivation of these aspiring principals until positions are available may need to be investigated. Consideration should be given to assigning the individuals to schools where continued practice and experience can be gained. Depending on the number of participants in the training activities, their placement will require careful thought.

Collective agreements may affect the feasibility of some activities. The suggestion of naming prospective principals as teacher designates to assume responsibility for a school in the absence of the principal may have to be further examined. Similarly, if developing a pool of candidates, co-operation with the professional organization may be necessary so that concerns of both the school district and the teacher's federation are addressed.

Recruitment and selection procedures may need to be revised to incorporate the identified knowledge, skills and qualities and to ensure the absence of barriers to any of the prospective principals such as women or members of visible minorities. Ambiguous qualities, including personal traits, commitment and witness to Catholic values, may demand more precise assessment practices. Recruitment and selection criteria should be incorporated into the training activities so that aspiring principals have a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations.

Aspiring principals should be encouraged to think in the longer term regarding how to prepare personally for a principalship, what experiences are relevant and what is involved in career planning. They should seek career guidance early in order to develop a comprehensive plan aimed at assisting them in their quest for a principalship.

Implications for Research

Although the implications may be applied in general, the specific research focus is intended to be conducted at the school district level.

Action research projects may be undertaken on a variety of issues. The development of professional development activities or training for incumbent principals may prove valuable especially for matters which require updating or to identify topics and needs of particular interest to the school district.

A further research activity might involve a school system survey regarding the training needs of incumbent principals. The survey could be expanded to examine the needs of all leadership positions and to investigate the feasibility of a generic leadership program.

Ongoing evaluation of the training activities should be conducted to assess the success of the preparation activities, to identify areas where improvement is warranted and to ensure that the training activities remain relevant.

Reflections

This study began while I was a full-time graduate student but did not conclude until I had completed two years in a principalship. During my residency, surrounded by colleagues pursuing a Master of Education degree, all thoughts were directed towards the research study. Although there were many apprehensions about my ability to write a thesis, discussions with others regarding various aspects of the research task provided support and encouragement to complete the task. The thesis was the top priority of my personal agenda. When I re-entered the work force after fourteen months of study, two chapters of the thesis remained incomplete. I was confident that I would easily conclude my research work and graduate in the fall.

The realities of the work world soon encroached on my plans to attend to the research study and I was unable to complete the thesis in time for fall graduation. Ironically, I assumed a principalship without the benefit of the training activities I was suggesting be incorporated in a school district-offered preparation program for principals. Throughout my first year as principal I reflected on the proposals of my thesis regarding training activities and revised my recommendations to match the needs I was facing as a first-year principal.

Rather than return to the university setting I attempted to complete the remaining two chapters in my home town. Many distractions and other obligations competed for my time and the research study became less of a priority. I think the distance from Thunder Bay to the University of Alberta had a great impact on my inability to focus solely on the thesis. By the end of the summer I had revised my proposals to reflect the actual demands of the principalship but the thesis was again incomplete.

Although a low priority during the school year, the unfinished research study was continually on my mind. Other than mental notes and a few written recommendations, no progress on the thesis was made. It was now two years since I had left full-time studies at the University and those with whom I had begun were finished. I decided that unless I returned to the University, the thesis would remain incomplete so I decided to spend the summer on campus.

Fortunately, my advisor, Dr. Miklos, was most understanding and with his support and guidance I managed to commit my time totally to the thesis. One of the remaining chapters was the Literature Review which I found very difficult to complete. I had read most of the material during the past two years and since I did not remember all of the pertinent information I began to re-read several of the reference sources. In addition, more recent literature was incorporated into the thesis.

Of all the chapters of the research study, I found the literature review the most onerous task. The data collection and analysis sections were the areas I preferred, especially examining the data for further results. It was similar to solving a mystery and constantly uncovering more clues. The analysis process continually coaxed the researcher to delve deeper and discover new findings.

The process of conducting a research study involved much reflection on the personal discipline which is necessary to completing the task. Many long hours and a strong desire to see the finished product are key factors in being able to conclude a thesis. This particular study took two years to complete and I would have preferred to have the thesis finished prior to returning to the workforce. However, my actual experience as a principal offered valuable insights to the final proposals for pre-service training. If I were advising others pursuing a research study, I would recommend completing the thesis before leaving the university setting. There is a real possibility that the research study may remain incomplete and a great deal of self-discipline and determination is required to successfully work without the assistance of an advisor and the support of colleagues.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Senior Administrators

1. Can you outline the important selection criteria for choosing principals?
2. What do you see as desirable characteristics and personal qualities necessary for selection to a principalship?
3. How do you define related leadership experience for aspiring principals?
4. What do you see as desirable components of a pre-service preparation program for principals in this system?
5. What strategies and techniques might be used in a principal preparation program?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Practicing Principals

1. Describe your experience as a principal, including the length of time you have been a principal and the types of schools you have been in.

2. Can you describe the actual demands of the job of a principal in the following areas: administration; curriculum; supervision; public relations and communications; Catholic educational leadership; and staff development?

3. What personal qualities and skills assist in responding to the demands of the job?

4. What experience prior to an appointment is beneficial to effectively performing the job of principal?

5. If a training program were developed for those aspiring to the position of principal, what would be desirable or beneficial content and delivery components of such a course?

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for Aspiring Principals

1. How have you prepared yourself for a career leading to a principalship?

2. What skills, personal qualities and experience do you think will prepare you for a principalship?

3. What experiences or preparation do you think is necessary before assuming a principalship?

4. What would you like to see in content and delivery components of a preparation program for candidates aspiring to a principalship?

APPENDIX D

Sample Letter Requesting Participation in the Interview

Dear __________

I am currently pursuing a Masters degree in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. My thesis for this degree is the development of a preparation program for prospective principals specifically addressing the needs of the Lakehead District Catholic School Board. Approval to proceed with research in Thunder Bay has been received from both the university and the school board.

As part of the data collection, interviews will be conducted with senior administration, principals and certificated prospective principals. Your expertise would provide valuable information for my thesis so I am requesting your co-operation in granting me about one hour of your time to carry out a taped interview during the week of February 20-24, 1989. I have attached the prepared questions for the three groups being interviewed.

Should you be available during the specified dates, would you please set aside a suitable time for this interview. I will call your office on February 17, 1989 to confirm the appointment.

Mr. Tennier, as the board-appointed supervisor of this study, has the complete proposal should you wish further information.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Sincerely,

Carol-Lynne Oldale